

BEARING THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH

Compiled and Edited
By
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INTRODUCTION

When the missionaries first came to our house, we were impressed by their manners, character and wholesome life style. We allowed them to show us their “family program” and to introduce us to the members of their church. We were strongly influenced with the warmth and love that these folks exhibited.

I suppose that our spiritual needs made us susceptible to their overtures. My wife and I had a strong desire to serve the Lord and were in a church where we failed to receive the spiritual food that we hungered for. We both had a conviction in our hearts that made us want to serve the Lord. The LDS Articles of Faith sounded orthodox to us and further attendance at the church meetings gave us a warm feeling for the wonderful folk that seemed to lavish us with Christian love.

I should have been more cautious when the alarm bells went off. Why did they make such a big deal with Joseph Smith? Why weren't there any crosses in their church? Why were they in such a hurry to get us baptized?

My wife was more sensitive than I when she said, “I just don't feel the presence of God here!” It seemed that things were moving too quickly as we were traveling to a town twenty miles away to be baptized. By this time, she was having serious second thoughts. In the dressing room she began to cry and was attended by two ladies that prayed with her. When she started to pray aloud to the God of heaven, the ladies immediately stopped their praying and left.

The baptism took place minutes later but my wife was not completely immersed the first time. This required a second attempt, which was also unsuccessful. A third try resulted in nearly total immersion, with a toe seeking as it were, on its own, to negate the effects of Mormonism.

Our trip back home resulted in little talk between any of us. My wife looked gaunt and gray, as if she had been drained of life. When we got home we realized that we had gotten into something that wasn't quite what we had hoped for. We had almost an embarrassed feeling, as though we had done something to be ashamed of. Our contact with the church was limited for a while.

We did have some friends in the church that we thought a great deal of. With the intention of getting them a gift, we stopped at a Christian bookstore to get a gift for them. While looking through the books, I was drawn to a particular book, *The God Makers*. I had a difficult time putting it down but eventually bought it. My wife and I read it and reread it thoroughly. It was then that we realized how foolish we had been. Being what should have been the spiritual leader of the family, I felt a tremendous burden of guilt. How could I have been so mislead and deceived?

I was determined that this terrible experience should be shared with others in the hope that they wouldn't make the same mistake. My contacts with ministries that ministered to Mormons and ex-Mormons has been invaluable. I have been in touch with Ed Decker, Chuck Sackett and Dick Baer, all of whom have lovingly reached out to those that have been in the clutches of the Mormon church. I owe them all a great debt of thanks for their support and help. I owe an even greater debt to the Lord Jesus Christ for allowing me to discover the error of my way before the door was shut behind me. To this day, I am convinced that He allowed this for His purpose.

Unfortunately, the Church looks on a former Mormon as an apostate. There is no other definition for them. Those who disclose the truth about the Church are described as “enemies of the Church” and anything that is written about the Church that originates from a source other than the LDS Church is “anti-Mormon.” I continue to feel love for the Mormon folks that I met while in the Church but realize that the label of “apostate” prevents them from making contact with me. They avoid me and my wife when we meet in the supermarket and other places. I pray fervently that they and others will eventually come to know the real Jesus Christ and the promises that He makes to each and every one of us.

If there is someone out there that is trapped in Mormonism and has not thoroughly investigated the Church, its history, foundation, leaders and doctrines, I urge you to read on. What I have compiled here is NOT what the missionaries will tell you when they come into your home. What it does contain is material supplied by several sources, mainly from Ed Decker, Dick Baer and Chuck Sackett and their ministries. The source of this material is primarily from Mormon sources and the Bible. The majority of this material can be found on the main floor of the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City. A significant portion of the references are from Mormon scripture that, while constantly changing, is still available.

This book is arranged by chapter, covering some of the major subjects that I consider fundamental to the Church. The subjects are designed to deal not only with the major differences between Christianity and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints but how the Mormon church came to adopt its doctrine. It is written to acquaint the reader with the history of the Church and the personalities that made it what it is today. If inconsistencies are evident, the reader will begin to discover what others have found. If you are a Mormon, I pray that you will be able to read this in an objective manner. It is not written to attack the members of the church but is designed to point out the aspects of the Church that are not disclosed by the missionaries. Many of the points addressed were the basis for the questions I had when I began to discover inconsistencies within the Church.

Derick S. Hartshorn

CHAPTER 1

JOSEPH SMITH, “PROPHET, SEER AND REVELATOR”

Many books dealing with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (hereafter referenced as LDS or Mormon) begin with a comparison between the LDS church and traditional, orthodox Christianity. This distinction will be made evident throughout the book in areas where the average person might not consider the differences significant. Those growing up in a traditional Christian setting become accustomed to terms that are used within their church or denomination. Many of these same terms are used within the Mormon church. However, the definitions and doctrines associated with these common terms might be somewhat surprising unless care is taken to CAREFULLY define them. The meanings, in most cases, bear no resemblance, whatsoever, to the definitions used in Biblical Christianity.

Some faiths claim no founder but Jesus Christ only, while others acknowledge an individual as the founder, originator or prime mover of their particular denomination. Few, if any, Christian religions or sects give their founder much more than a brief acknowledgment. Jehovah’s Witnesses acknowledge Charles Taze Russell as their founder but proudly claim that they follow no man. This claim is negated by their statement that The Watchtower Society is itself a prophet¹.

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other Gods, even that Prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him”.

¹ Watchtower, April 1, 1972, pp. 197-200

This condemning yardstick of truth used by God to measure the prophet is found in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. There are no gray areas in determining truth, particularly when one claims to speak for God. A prophecy is either ALL true or ALL false. Partial fulfillment is not of God, thus it is false prophecy. A true prophet of God cannot utter a single false prophecy, not one! God saw fit to warn His children to avoid those that would lead them astray. His word in Luke 7:15-20 warned of *ravening wolves insheep's clothing*. Ever since Satan was cast from heaven with all his demons, man has been subject to temptation from false teaching by wolves in sheep's clothing.

Joseph Smith was best described as an unlearned man that, as we shall discover, was involved with the occult. The Bible has much to say in regard to occultic involvement, none of it good. How many of Joseph's words were his and how many were of demonic origin is known only by God. We will carefully explore how the exploits and prophecies of Joseph Smith agree with what the word of God has proclaimed.

A question may arise in the minds of many which inquire as to how God communicates with those He chooses to use. The Mormons have no question in their minds as to how they believe God used Joseph. The story (or stories) of his first "vision" is well documented.

We do know that the LDS hold their founder, Joseph Smith, in very high regard. The missionary message usually begins with Joseph Smith's "vision" which eventually resulted in the founding of the Church.

My first impression when entering a Mormon church was bewilderment at the prolific paintings and imagery of Joseph Smith. Among these was a painting showing Joseph on his knees before "two personages" that the Church regards as God the Father and Jesus Christ. This imagery seemed to overwhelm the lone painting of Christ addressing the inhabitants of the New World.

It seemed only fitting to discover as much as I possibly could about this "Prophet, Seer and Revelator." On "Fast and Testimony Sunday," the first Sunday of the month in the LDS church, members give their testimony about the church and Joseph Smith. It usually begins with: "I bear my testimony that this is the true church and Joseph Smith was a true prophet," or something similar.

Who is this Joseph Smith and what great revelations did he receive that has resulted in a world wide church of over five million members? Many books have been written about him. He himself wrote the story of his life, the Church has written several and non-Mormon sources have authored many. It seemed only fair to compare the accounts that have been published to determine to what degree they differed.

The early nineteenth century was a time of great religious excitement in the Northeastern United States. New York State was rocked with spiritual renewal from every direction. While mighty men of God, such as Charles Finney, sparked by the power of the Holy Spirit, led so many thousands of people to the Cross of Calvary, there also arose those who captivated the few with the fruits of their own vanity and drew them away into the doctrines of a different gospel².

One such man was Joseph Smith, born into a struggling rural farm family in 1805. The Smith family was given to dabbling in the mysteries of divination, glasslooking, peepstoning, and "Abraç". His father, Joseph Sr., had a special gift of visions, through powers from the unseen world.

Joseph Jr. was to set his own mark in the world in a series of bold and visionary declarations. He was to claim that in the spring of 1820, he retired to a grove of trees near his home in Manchester, New York³.

There he sought the Word of the Lord concerning which church he should join of all those experiencing revival. He later testified that God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared before him in a pillar of light, above the brightness of the sun. This became one of the most important events in all of Mormon history, the day that God the Father and Jesus Christ came down, in the flesh, and told Joseph Smith that the churches were all wrong and that, in effect, Christianity was totally lost.

"When the Light rested upon me I saw two personages ... one of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him!" I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light

² *The Birth of Heresy*, J. Ed Decker

³ *ibid.* p. 2

which of all the sects was right and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong ... all their creeds were an abomination in His sight, that those professors were all corrupt.”⁴

JOIN NONE OF THEM

He said that they instructed him that he was to join none of the churches for they were all wrong; all their creeds were an abomination in God’s sight; and those who professed these creeds were all corrupt⁵. This admonition, coming as it did from the Godhead, apparently had little effect on Joseph. While he did ponder the edict for eight years, he eventually joined one of the “abominable” churches. In this interim period, he received many angelic visits, had been led to the golden plates and was in the process of translating them.

OH, WHAT THE HECK

Joseph’s wife, Emma, had been a Methodist from the age of seven. Whether Joseph joined the church because of her or for his own reasons are of little consequence. He became a member of the Methodist Church in 1828⁶. A telling account by two of Emma’s cousins, Joseph and Hiel Lewis appeared in a newspaper and is probably overlooked by many historians.

I, with Joshua McKune, a local preacher at the time, I think in June, 1828, heard on Saturday that Joe Smith had joined the church on Wednesday afternoon.... “We thought it was a disgrace to the church to have a practicing necromancer, a dealer in enchantments and bleeding ghosts in it. So, on Sunday we went to father’s the place of meeting that day, and got there in season to see Smith and talked to him some time in father’s shop before the meeting. “Told him that his occupation, habits and moral character were at variance with the discipline, that his name would be a disgrace to the church, that there should have been recantation, confession and at least promised reformation-that he could that day publicly ask that his name be stricken from the class book, or stand investigation. “He chose the former, and did that very day make request that his name be taken off the class book.”⁷

CHRISTIANITY LOST

If we accept Joseph Smith’s vision, we must immediately conclude the Christian church is in very deep trouble. We must also conclude that Joseph either didn’t believe what the “personage” said or that he deliberately disobeyed him. While the Christian may doubt the authenticity of Joseph Smith’s statements, several very solid facts remain.

First, it is the basic Mormon belief that God finds the Christian worship of Him unacceptable and even loathsome⁸.

Second, the Mormon belief that Christianity (as it remains) is lost, irrevocably separates Mormonism and Christianity.

Third, there is no way that both can be right. The claims of Mormonism to being the “Restored” church exclude that possibility forever.

The foregoing description of God’s appearance to Joseph Smith is noteworthy beyond his expressed displeasure with Christianity. Far more critical is his statement that God the Father and Jesus Christ both appeared before him separately, side by side, and in the flesh. Critical because it immediately separates Mormonism and Christianity in regard to the nature of God. John, in his gospel, writes: *No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.* (John 6:46). It would be stretching the facts to the breaking point to suppose that John was talking about Joseph Smith. As if to reiterate this statement, and answer the Mormon that might suppose that he was, if fact, speaking of Joseph, he repeats it in I John 4:12 to rule out all mortals.

⁴ *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith-History 1:19; 2:14-20 (henceforth, JSH)

⁵ *ibid.*, 1:19

⁶ *BYU Studies*, Spring 1969, p. 384

⁷ *Amboy Journal*, June 11, 1879, p.1

⁸ JSH, *ibid.*, 1:19

JOSEPH'S CHANGING CONCEPT OF GOD

To the inquiring mind, many questions suddenly arise. I began to have many questions about the Church and its doctrines after my baptism. Each one was followed by another. For that reason, speculating what someone not acquainted with the LDS church might ask, I will pose some questions that beg answers.

Q. Let's go back to the "First Vision" that the prophet Joseph Smith claimed to have had. This is the principle message of the first of several discussions that the Mormon missionaries memorize in their teaching program. Just when did Joseph have that "first" vision, anyway?

A. Well, we can't be too sure.

Q. What? Doesn't his "History" tell us?

A. You are probably referring to the account in the *Pearl of Great Price* under Joseph Smith-History 1:14 where he claims that it was in the spring of 1820.

Q. Right! That is canonized scripture, isn't it? So it must be true?

A. What the Mormon missionaries "forget" to tell you is that the reference above was NOT written until 1838 which is some 18 YEARS after it was supposed to have happened!

Q. Well, even so, what's so bad about that?

A. Simply that the version written in 1838 contradicts the other five different accounts of Joseph's "FIRST" vision.

Q. Well, in any case, what's so important about ANY vision?

A. The LDS Church seems to attach a critical importance to it: *Belief in the vision is one of the fundamentals to which faithful members give assent. Its importance is second only to belief in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. The story is an essential part of the first lesson given by Mormon missionaries to prospective converts, and its acceptance is necessary before baptism*⁹.

SIX DIFFERENT VISION VERSIONS

Q. Wait a minute! What five other accounts?

A. Understandably, the Mormon missionaries wouldn't tell you about them. At least not on the first visit, anyway. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints scholar, Dr. C. Bruce Mesle points out that one of his colleagues, RLDS church historian, Richard P. Howard, presented a paper comparing *Six Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith Jr.'s Early Visionary Experiences* at the September 1977 meetings of the John Whitmer Historical Association. And that all of the accounts claimed either direct authorship by Joseph Smith or at least his editorial approval.¹⁰

Q. Well, we shouldn't be upset with six different accounts since they probably all say, in effect, the same thing? Should we?

A. Dr. Mesle points out that Joseph "might have been recounting different parts of the vision, which taken together give a more complete picture." But he points out that there are clear differences among the different accounts. He goes on to explain some of the serious differences including accounts with one person appearing, two persons appearing, many angels in another account, overlooking important dates and the motivation for initially inquiring of the Lord in the first place, etc.

Q. What is the bottom line, in this RLDS scholar's observation of the different accounts of Joseph's "First Vision"?

⁹ James B. Allen, BYU Professor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1966, pg. 29

¹⁰ *Sunstone Magazine*, History, Faith and Myth, Vol. 7: 6, pg. 11

A. Dr. Mesle states: “We do not seem to be dealing here with mere differences of emphasis or with partial accounts that can be neatly fitted together to provide a complete picture. Rather we seem to have more or less intentional efforts to build up the miraculous character of the events to buttress Joseph’s position as he comes into increasing conflict with other denominations. One thing does seem certain; we cannot be certain about the First Vision. We cannot know that it occurred or, if it occurred, when or what Joseph experienced.”¹¹

THREE SALT LAKE VERSIONS¹²

Q. Well, that comes from a scholar from the “Reorganized” LDS Church. The Utah Mormons don’t acknowledge the “different accounts” of the “First Vision” ... Do they?

A. They didn’t until the other versions finally came to light after having been suppressed for over 130 years. The Mormon leaders admit to at least three different versions. Because they have to.

THE 1838 “OFFICIAL” VERSION

So in accordance with my determination, to ask of God I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head ... When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spoke unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other) ‘This is my beloved Son, hear him.’¹³

... I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)... I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt... He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time.¹⁴

Joseph was about thirty-three years old when he wrote the First Vision story, eighteen years after his claim of the “heavenly visitation.” This “official” account (with some minor modifications) is used at the present time by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in its publications, its churches, and its missionary work.

THE 1832 VERSION

Joseph in his earlier years, gave several other different accounts of this vision; The following unedited manuscript account is one written about 1832, prior to the official account:

“... the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come (sic) down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of God and the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spoke unto me saying Joseph my son Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all those who believe in my name may have Eternal life behold the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside (sic) from the gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to their ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouths of the prophets and Apostles behold and lo I come quickly as it was written of me in the cloud clothed in the glory of my Father ...”¹⁵

According to the same publication¹⁶, this account was the only one recorded in Joseph Smith’s own handwriting. It is noted that in this version, he mentions seeing only one personage; and he states that he was in his sixteenth year

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 12

¹² *BYU Studies*, Spring 1969 (Vol. 9, No. 3), nineteen page article titled *The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision*.

¹³ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3:728

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 748).

¹⁵ *BYU Studies*, Spring 1969, p. 280

¹⁶ *BYU Studies*, Summer, 1971, p. 462

when this occurred. Both of these facts disagree with the official version, which was dictated some six years later. The above account was never really finished.

In this 1832 version, Joseph states further that between the ages of twelve and fifteen he was an avid reader of the Bible. He claims that his study of the Scriptures led him to understand that all the denominations were wrong. He wrote:

*... by searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament.*¹⁷

Six years later, when he wrote his official First Vision story, he decided that he never had felt that all churches were wrong from his study of the bible. Instead, he claimed that it was during a vision of the Father and the Son that he first learned this information. He indicated this came as a great surprise, *... for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong.* This even contradicted what Joseph had said a few paragraphs earlier in that same account, where he claimed that, *I often said to myself...Who of all these parties are right; or are they all wrong together?* Although the former statement appears in the original manuscript,¹⁸ such a serious contradiction could not be allowed to stand; and after Joseph's death, the embarrassing words were taken out!

Even without those words, however, the 1838 official account does not agree with the 1832 version. In the 1832 account, it is his Bible reading that stirs him to seek God; while in the 1838 story, it is an alleged revival that motivates him. In the 1832 he already knows all the churches are wrong, while in the 1838 story, it is the "two personages" who first inform him of this.

THE 1835 VERSION

In 1835, Joseph Smith produced still another, differing account of his First Vision story:

*...I called on the Lord in mighty prayer. A pillar of fire appeared above my head; which presently rested down upon me and filled me with unspeakable joy. A personage appeared in the midst of the pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared like unto the first; he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee. He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I saw many angels in this vision. I was 14 years old when I received this first communication.*¹⁹

In this account, nothing indicates that the "personages" were God the Father and Jesus Christ. The "many angels" not mentioned in the other accounts strongly suggests that the message presented is delivered by angels.

Different people may have different views of the same event, but when the same person tells opposing stories about an event, his honesty is called into question. It is interesting to note that *The first published Mormon history, begun with Joseph's collaboration in 1834 by Oliver Cowdery, ignored it altogether, Joseph's own description of the first vision was not published until 1842, twenty-two years after the memorable event...*²⁰

A perplexing question the missionaries will probably stumble over is the matter of the contradiction between Joseph meeting with God the Father and Jesus Christ before receiving the power of the priesthood.

Since it is taught (*And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.*²¹) that the priesthood is necessary to see the Father and live, it was not until nine years after the Vision that Joseph received this power²². It might be interesting to note how many explanations for this seeming contradiction will be given by authorities in the Church. Stay tuned.

VISIONS RUN IN THE FAMILY

¹⁷ *BYU Studies*, Spring 1969, p. 279

¹⁸ *ibid*, p. 290

¹⁹ *ibid*, p. 284

²⁰ Fawn Brody, *No Man Knows My History*, New York, 1957, pp. 24-25

²¹ *Doctrines and Covenants*, 84:21-22

²² *Doctrines and Covenants*, 13, preface, gives date of receiving the Melchizedek priesthood as May 15, 1829; *History of the Church*, 1:39

Q. Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon Prophet, was supposed to have had his “First Vision” in about 1820. When did the Prophet’s father, Joseph Smith, Sr. have HIS “First Vision?”

A. The prophet’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, in her book *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* explains that it was sometime in 1811 when her husband (who was the Mormon prophet’s father) became “much excited upon the subject of religion; yet he would not subscribe to any particular system of faith, but contended for the ancient order, as established by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His Apostles.”²³ She continued: *One night my husband retired to his bed in a very thoughtful state of mind, contemplating the situation of the Christian religion, or the confusion and discord that were extant.. before waking he had the following vision...*

Q. OK. The prophet’s father had his “first vision” in 1811. Did he have any more? And if so, when?

A. Well, he had another vision the same year, i.e. 1811²⁴. He had up to a total of seven “visions,” the last four in the year of 1819²⁵. Thus, one year before Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon Prophet had HIS “First Vision.” His father had four visions.

Q. Did the prophet’s mother report any visions?

A. After she “made a solemn covenant”²⁶ and she was profoundly moved by a “dream” she reported on pages 43-45.

Q. In the three different accounts of Joseph’s “First Vision” which were finally admitted to by the Mormon Leaders²⁷ which version is the “more accurate”? ONE, the 1832 “Version” where ONE personage appears to Joseph; or TWO, the 1835 “Version” where two unnamed personages plus “many angels?” appear to the Mormon “prophet”; or THREE, the “official” 1838 “Version” recorded as Mormon “Scripture” in The Pearl of Great Price where Joseph reports EIGHTEEN YEARS AFTER the event that God and Jesus Christ appeared and told him that all the churches were wrong?

A. BYU professor, Marvin Hill, states: “It seems to me that everybody has approached the issue from the wrong end, by starting with the 1838 official version when the account they should be considering is that of 1832. Merely on the face of it, the 1832 version stands a better chance of being more accurate and unembellished than the 1838 account which was intended as a public statement, streamlined for publication.”²⁸

Q. Joseph Smith was describing the ancient Americans’ life in detail several years before he received the *Book of Mormon* “plates.” When did Joseph receive these “plates”?

A. He explains in his “official” record that he received them “on the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven.”²⁹

Q. So Joseph received the “plates” late in 1827. What interesting “thing” was Joseph doing in 1824?

A. Joseph’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, in her book *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, relates that in 1824 “we continued to get the children together every evening for the purpose of listening... During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be IMAGINED. HE WOULD DESCRIBE THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF THIS CONTINENT, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular, their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them.”³⁰

²³ Utah edition, p. 46

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 48

²⁵ *ibid.*, pg. 65, 68

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 34

²⁷ *BYU Studies*, Spring 1969, pp. 275-294

²⁸ Marvin S. Hill, *The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Summer 1982, p. 39).

²⁹ *Pearl of Great Price: Joseph Smith History*, 1:59

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 82-83

Q. So Joseph was describing the ancient American's dress, mode of travel, animals they rode, cities, buildings, warfare, and religious worship "with as much ease seemingly, as he had spent his whole life among them" in 1824 several years before he received the plates? Hmmm. And after he received the plates, how long did he have them before he gave them back to the angel?

A. Well, he received the plates in 1827³¹ and was still translating them in 1830³¹. So he had the plates for over two years before he gave them back to the angel. He and Oliver Cowdery returned the plates to a cave that "opened up" for them inside the Hill Cumorah. The cave was supposedly filled with wagon loads of more plates.

JOSEPH'S VERSION

Q. How did Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon?

A. It depends on who you talk to.

Q. Let's start with Joseph Smith. What did he say about it?

A. Very little. He really didn't like to talk about it. For example, when his brother requested a firsthand account of the coming forth of the *Book of Mormon* at a church conference in 1831, Joseph said: "It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; it was not expedient for him to relate these things³²."

Q. What about this business that it was translated by the Urim and Thummim? Isn't that what the missionaries teach us?

A. They may say that, but actual witnesses are more inclined to tell you that it was translated using a "seer" stone that the prophet used for receiving revelations, hunting lost treasure and in translating ancient writings.

JOSEPH'S MAGIC STONE

Q. A "seer" stone. What is a "seer" stone, and where did the prophet get it and where is it now?

A. Hey, one question at a time. First, a "seer" stone is a stone that apparently has magical or divine qualities that allows proper users of the stone to see visions, translate writing and so forth. There are several articles describing their use³³. Joseph Smith got his when he and others were digging a well. *Book of Mormon* witness Martin Harris said: "Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase twenty-four feet from the surface. In the stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge."³⁴ In addition, Wilford Woodruff, who became the fourth president of the church wrote in his Journal on May 18, 1888 that "... Joseph Smith found the "seer stone by revelation some 30 feet under the earth³⁵ ." Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth president of the Mormon Church, while an apostle, said that "... the Seer Stone which was in the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith in early days... is now in the possession of the Church."³⁶ Elder Joseph Anderson, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve and long-time secretary to the First Presidency, clarified in 1971 that the "... Seer Stone that Joseph Smith used in the early days of the Church is in the possession of the Church and is kept in a safe in Joseph Fielding Smith's office ... (the stone is slightly smaller than a chicken egg, oval, chocolate in color)."³⁷

Q. Did anyone else have a "seer" stone?

A. Sure.

³¹ D.H.C. 1:71

³² *Minutes of General Conference*, 25 Oct. 1831, cited in *Far West Record*, p. 13, LDS Church Archives

³³ an excellent reference is *Joseph Smith: The Gift of Seeing in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Summer 1982, pp. 49-69).

³⁴ *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, p. 163

³⁵ *Wilford Woodruff Journal*, LDS Archives

³⁶ *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2, p. 225

³⁷ *Restoration Reporter*, 1 June, 1971:8).

Q. Like who, and what was he doing with it?

A. For instance, *Book of Mormon* witness, Hiram Page, was giving revelations through a “seer” stone deceiving many, to the extent that Joseph had a revelation to tell Hiram to stop it³⁸.

Q. Back to translating the Book of Mormon. How was it done?

MARTIN HARRIS’ VERSION

A. It depends on who you talk to. Here are some examples: Martin Harris reported that “The Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience sake he would use the seer stone.... By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, ‘written,’ and if correctly written that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used.”³⁹

EMMA’S VERSION

The second scribe to serve Joseph was his wife, Emma. She explained the translating process like this to her son, Joseph Smith, III, who became the president of the Reorganized Church: “In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.... The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment wrapped in a small linen table-cloth, which I have given him to fold them in.”⁴⁰

OLIVER’S WIFE’S VERSION

Oliver Cowdery’s wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery recorded how the translation had taken place at her father’s house: “I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith’s translating the Book of Mormon. He translated it at my father’s house, and I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours.... He (Joseph) would place the director in his hat, and then place his face in his hat so as to exclude the light.”⁴¹

DAVID WHITMER’S VERSION

Elizabeth’s brother, David Whitmer, after leaving the Mormon Church, explained his version of how the plates were translated, Said *Book of Mormon* witness Whitmer: “I will give you a description of the manner in which the *Book of Mormon* was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principle scribe, and when it was written down and repeated by Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the *Book of Mormon* was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.”⁴²

JOSEPH SMITH’S FATHER-IN-LAW’S VERSION

Joseph Smith’s father-in-law, Isaac Hale’s description of the translation during the few months that it took place at his home, was as follows: “The manner in which he [Joseph Smith] pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money diggers, with a stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates

³⁸ *Doctrine and Covenants*, 28:11, 12

³⁹ *Deseret News*, 30 Nov. 1881

⁴⁰ *Saints Herald*, 1 Oct. 1879, 26:276-77

⁴¹ RLDS Church Archives

⁴² David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 12

were at the same time hid in the woods.”⁴³ Michael Morse, who married the prophet’s wife’s sister described the translating process as he observed it to the RLDS First Presidency member W. W. Blair, “When Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, [Morse] had occasion more than once to go into his immediate presence, and saw him engaged at his work of translation. The mode of procedure consisted in Joseph’s placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a hat, then putting his face into the hat, so as to entirely cover his face, resting his elbows upon his knees, and then dictating word after word, while the scribes Emma, John Whitmer, O. Cowdery, or some other wrote it down.”⁴⁴

Incidentally, who should have a “seer” stone? Brigham Young recorded the answer to that question when he wrote: “I met with the Twelve at brother Joseph’s... He [Joseph] said that every man who had lived on the earth was entitled to a seer stone, and should have one, but they are kept from them in consequence of their wickedness, and most of those who do find one make an evil use of it; he showed us his seer stone.”⁴⁵

THE BOTTOM LINE

What is the bottom line? Over 20 years ago a “Reorganized” LDS researcher examined the method of translating the *Book of Mormon* and concluded that most of the translation was done with Joseph peering into a hat and dictating to a scribe, WITH THE PLATES NOT IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE PROPHET⁴⁶. A current appraisal by Utah Mormons revealed a similar conclusion, and asked a perplexing question: “Why, for example, was such great care taken to preserve the plates for thousands of years if they were not to be used directly in the translation process?” In their 19 page article⁴⁷, the authors also remark that “The concept of a single seer stone is another problem area, for we have been taught since the Prophets day that the Urim and Thummin were used” (to translate the Book of Mormon)⁴⁸. They add “That the Prophet should have used a seer stone rather than the Nephite interpreter is puzzling in itself.” Why do the authors find using the ‘seer’ stone peculiar for translating? Perhaps because Joseph’s “official” record mentions the “Urim and Thummim.”⁴⁹ and “by means of the Urim and Thummin I translated some of them,”⁵⁰ They conclude their findings by stating that “some things seem clear Joseph Smith discovered a ‘singular-looking seer stone’ in 1822 which not only served as a medium through which, according to numerous descriptions, all of the present *Book of Mormon* was translated but which also played a vital role in the discovery of the Nephite record.”⁵¹ Still, they observe, the prophet himself stated that “Through the medium of the Urim and Thummin I translated the record by the gift and power of God.”⁵² How did he really “translate” the record? By the Urim and Thummin as HE said? Or by the use of a “seer” stone as his scribes claimed? Ask the missionaries.

JOSEPH’S CHANGING BELIEF IN GOD

Present Mormon apologists explain that Joseph never referred to his “First Vision” during the first years of the church. Why did it subsequently become important? It seems that Joseph’s concept of God had changed. Joseph changed his belief in God? Who says so? And what do they base their findings on? Brigham Young University professor Marvin S. Hill wrote regarding the different accounts of the “First Vision”⁵³

“But there are, undeniably, differences in the several accounts, not all of them minor from the standpoint of Mormon theology To focus upon the discrepancies touching the personages of the Godhead in the first vision story, whether one or two personages, is to concentrate on a theological question and to miss it’s historical significance If over the years Joseph’s conception of the Godhead changed, this is not evidence of fraud any more than the adaption of other aspects of his theology in later years proves to be.”⁵⁴

⁴³ *The Sequehanna Register*, 1 May 1834

⁴⁴ *Saints Herald*, 15 June 1879, Vol. 26:190

⁴⁵ *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 27 Dec. 1841

⁴⁶ *Sunstone Magazine*, *A Further Inquiry Into the Historicity of The Book of Mormon*, Sept/Oct 1982, p. 20

⁴⁷ Richard Van Wagoner and Steve Walker, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1982, p. 53-72

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Wagner and Walker, *ibid.*, pg. 62

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*, pg. 63

⁵² *Times and Seasons*, March 1842 pg. 707

⁵³ *BYU Studies*, Winter 1972

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 78-79

1830 GOD IS A SPIRIT

In an unusual (for a Mormon writer) ten-page article, Brigham Young University professor, Thomas G. Alexander, discusses the development of Mormon Theology under the title *The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: from Joseph Smith to progressive theology*. This article⁵⁵ points out that:

“What is not so apparent is that before 1835 the LDS doctrines on God and man were quite close to those of contemporary Protestant denominations.”⁵⁶

Professor Alexander further states that studying the available history of the church up to 1835:

“... will further demonstrate that the doctrine of God preached and believed before 1835 was essentially trinitarian, with God the Father seen as an absolute personage of spirit, Jesus Christ as a personage of tabernacle, and the Holy Ghost as an impersonal spiritual member of the Godhead.”⁵⁷

Professor Alexander’s article points out that it was Apostle James E. Talmadge who reconsidered and reconstructed the doctrine of the Holy Cross.

To contrast the new belief in the Holy Ghost we only need to remember what Orson Pratt, himself an apostle and one who intimately knew the young Mormon Prophet Joseph, said sixty years prior to Talmadge’s new definition of the Holy Ghost. Said apostle Pratt in a sermon in 1855:

“I am inclined to think from some things in the revelations, that there is such a being as a personal Holy Ghost, but it is not set forth as a positive fact, and the Lord has never given me any revelation upon the subject, and consequently I cannot fully make up my mind one way or the other.”⁵⁸

This development of Joseph’s theology concerning God can be easily seen by comparing the contents of the “Lectures on Faith” first included in the 1835 edition of the *Doctrines and Covenants* and the description of God given nine years later by the prophet on April 7th, 1844 during his most famous sermon, the King Follett Discourses. The Lectures on Faith were seven lessons prepared for use in the School of Elders, conducted in Kirtland, Ohio during the winter of 1834-35 and comprised of the *Doctrines and Covenants*. In Lecture Five we find the following:

“We shall, in this lecture speak of the Godhead: we mean the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are two personages who constitute the great matchless, governing and supreme power over all things... they are the Father and the Son: the Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power possessing all perfection and fullness: the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle.”

Again,

Q. How many personages are there in the Godhead?

A. Two, the Father and the Son. And we read of the Holy Spirit.

Q. Do the Father and the Son possess the same mind?

A. They do...

Q. What is this mind?

A. The Holy Spirit.

Q. Do the Father, Son and Holy Spirit constitute the Godhead?

A. They do.

⁵⁵ *Sunstone Magazine*, July/August 1980

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 24

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 25

⁵⁸ *Journal of Discourses*, p. 338

Thus Joseph taught that God the Father was a personage of Spirit, that the Son was a personage of tabernacle (he had a body) and the Holy Spirit was the “mind” that both the Father and the Son possess. The Lecture then asks:

Q. Does the foregoing account of the Godhead lay a sure foundation for the exercise of faith in him unto life and salvation?

A. It does.

A DEMANDING ANGEL

In the evening of September 21, 1823 (Joseph reported later), while in an act of prayer and supplication, seeking divine direction regarding the next step in God’s plan for his life, God moved again. Another being, who identified himself as the Angel Moroni, descended in a brilliant pillar of light and repeatedly instructed Joseph in the next steps of the restoration of the true gospel through Joseph’s holy calling to that purpose⁵⁹.

Moroni told him of a stone chest he had buried in the nearby “Hill Cumorah,” in the beginning of the fifth century. It held a book of scripture written upon gold plates, containing the “fullness of the everlasting gospel”, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants of the American continent, who were actually the descendants of Jewish settlers who were led there from Jerusalem by God, 600 years before Christ. The chest also contained the Urim, Thummim, and Breastplate of Jewish antiquity for the purpose of translation.

Led to the site by Moroni, Joseph was instructed not to remove the items until given permission. He visited the location annually for four years, until told the time was ready for these scriptures to be translated. And so came forth the Book of Mormon, which Joseph Smith translated from Egyptian characters, inscribed on the gold plates⁶⁰. But before work on the *Book of Mormon* was to reach fruition, the spirits required placation. The following story details a series of incidents that bring up serious questions as to which spirit was leading Joseph Smith⁶¹.

TREASURE, PLATES OR DEMANDING SPIRITS

As September 22, 1824 approached, Joseph Smith Jr. must have suffered growing anxiety. He had waited a year to atone for his earlier blunder, when he had thoughtlessly set aside the golden plates to see if there was any more treasure to be had. At that time the spirit told Joseph that he could have the plates next year if he brought his older brother Alvin along. This was evidently a vote of no confidence regarding the reliability and worthiness of Joseph alone. But the worse was yet to come.

Alvin died in November of 1823 and in the 1824 audience Joseph had to visit Moroni alone again. Several sources cited by D. Michael Quinn quoted Smith as telling them that the message he received from “Moroni” was, in effect: “Without your dead brother, Alvin, you cannot have the golden plates.”⁶² One can imagine Joseph’s frame of mind as he turned toward home. His prospects were ebbing, but all was not lost. The unique context of the quest for the plates allowed for substituting a talisman of body parts wrenched from the corpse of a dead man instead of the man himself. Only seven days later a bizarre notice appeared in the local newspaper, the *Wayne Sentinel*:

TO THE PUBLIC, Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation that my son, Alvin, has been removed from the place of his interment and dissected which reports every person possessed of human sensibility must know are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations, I, with some of my neighbors this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed. This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who have put it in circulation, that it is earnestly requested that they would desist therefrom, and that it is believed by some that they have been stimulated more by desire to injure the reputation of certain persons than by a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends. Joseph Smith Palmyra September 25, 1824⁶³.

⁵⁹ JSH, 1:27-35

⁶⁰ JSH, 2:30-35

⁶¹ *A Necromantic Incident in Palmyra, N.Y.*, 1989, by Guinn Williams

⁶² D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism And The Magic World View*, 1987, p.136

⁶³ Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 1971, p.28

The elder Smith was denying that Alvin's body had been exhumed and "dissected" and he purported to prove this by digging up the body and examining it. The statement scolded rumor mongers and asked for an end to the affair. But Smith Sr.'s statement is misleading, to say the least. The first clause infers that Alvin was rumored to be the victim of grave robbers who stole corpses to sell to medical schools: ("...removed from the place of his interment and dissected.") New York state had passed a law in 1813 to stop that practice and some of the precise language of the statute was evoked by Smith Sr. (Statute passed by the 36th session of the NY state legislature, [1813], Chapter CXXIV, "And Act to prevent digging up and removing dead bodies for the purpose of Dissection.") But those who stole corpses for profit used only fresh bodies. A body buried in the earth ten months previously that had passed through the dampness of winter and then the heat of summer obviously would not qualify. The issue was a red herring.

BACKGROUND

The statement refers to Joseph Jr. briefly and in the most elliptical way possible: ("...desire to injure the reputation of [certain persons]"). This infers, discreetly, that some of the gossip was directed against young Joseph and that was certainly true, given Moroni's requirements. Joseph Jr. was part of a group of money diggers who were deeply involved in occult ritual and who subscribed to a magic world view. The group's operations started about 1820 with Smith Sr. and his older sons forming the core⁶⁴.

They soon attracted young neighborhood men who were of like mind. Alvin was the early leader. Apparently, he first saw the golden plates in his seer stone but could not break the enchantment and take them⁶⁵. Joseph Jr. had shown a good deal of seeric promise and when Alvin lay dying he implored Joseph Jr. with great passion to continue the project. Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the boys, described the dramatic scene in her book. She also said that, "Alvin Manifested, if such could be the case, greater zeal and anxiety in regard to the Record that had been shown to Joseph, than any of the rest of the family."⁶⁶

There was a spiritual kinship existing between Alvin and Joseph because of their common metaphysical gift that was not present among the other sons. Eighteen year old Joseph Jr. clearly inherited Alvin's mantle as leader of the group as the 1824 audience with Moroni approached. Young Joseph was rather ingenuous and talked freely of his aspirations and visions as regarding treasure seeking. It was his cohorts and family who knew of the upcoming audience and the requirement to bring Alvin. There is plenty of precedent in occult lore for using a portion of a dead man as a substitute for the living man.

This would appear to be a case of using a talisman—an object that was magically "charged" by a magician so that it contained the presence of someone or something the magician wished to influence. Alvin's remains would be a talisman all right, but the bigger issue is that it would also involve necromancy.

Necromancy is invocation of spirits of the dead, mainly to obtain information. Most experts don't define the genteel gatherings where a medium holds a seance in a darkened drawing room as necromancy. Classical necromancy was an unlawful form of ceremonial magic, approached with fear and trembling. There are two kinds of necromancy—evoking the spirit of a dead man through ritual only, and working directly with the corpse to enliven it to speak. (Actually, the spirit of the departed, which had temporarily returned, would speak.) Joseph Smith was thoroughly versed in the first type. This is what the audience with Moroni was all about. Anyone who wanted to use a portion of Alvin's corpse that was "charged" with his spirit would necessarily be involved in the second type.

ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENT

Let us now examine the newspaper statement. The second clause reads, "I, with some of my neighbors this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body, which had not been disturbed." But Smith Sr.'s account does not seem plausible. Alvin had been buried ten months earlier. The grave site was probably familiar to a number of Smith's family friends since Alvin died in the prime of young manhood, seemingly sorely missed. "A vast concourse of people offended the obsequies," according to his mother⁶⁷.

⁶⁴ E.D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*; 1834, affidavits of Willard Chase and William Stafford

⁶⁵ article By John Dart, *Los Angeles Times*, 1985

⁶⁶ Lucy Mack Smith, *History Of Joseph Smith By His Mother*; ed. by Preston Nibley; 1945, p.89

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.89

Any sign of tampering on a nearly year-old grave would have been detected by signs of freshly dug earth. Even careful work by a ghoul could not have been concealed in light of the amount of dirt it would be necessary to move to reach a buried coffin. In addition, grave robbers were notoriously sloppy. They worked at night, and as rapidly as possible, sometimes in a frenzy. They were usually under acute psychological stress.

A necromancer who hoped to secure a corpse for occult purposes was especially assailed by a feeling of compulsive dread because he knew that his purpose flouted all ordinary human mores. Therefore, if Smith Sr. truly wished to show that Alvin's body was undisturbed he would have had only to examine the grave site for tampering. If he went so far as to dig up an undisturbed grave and open the coffin he would himself create the conditions for the wildest kind of rumor mongering unless the operation was carefully handled as a formal inquest.

The notice was indeed couched in the stilted language of an inquest but all proof is absent. It tells of the presence of "some of my neighbors" but does not name them. Dated September 25 and stating the disinterment took place "this morning," it ran every Wednesday in the paper for 6 weeks but the wording never changed; verification by the neighbors was never published.

Surely neighbors who accompanied a wronged father in such a grim task would want to help clear up the rumors if it happened as Smith Sr. stated. Not giving their affidavits nullified their effort, like laboring all day and then not bothering to pick up their wages. Furthermore, the fact that the notice ran for 6 weeks meant that it did not stop the rumors. Placing the notice drew even more attention-unnecessarily, if the grave had been undisturbed.

If we accept Smith's statement at face value his action seems hysterical, more likely to raise suspicion and draw additional attention rather than diminish it. Moreover, where is Joseph Jr.'s part in the statement? Obviously, he was the one under suspicion of opening the grave because of the requirements of Moroni. Apparently, he did not even join the purported visit to the grave.

Did Joseph Sr. even ask Joseph Jr. about the rumors before the opening of the grave? If Joseph Jr. denied the allegations then was the father so lacking confidence in the denial that he had to check for himself? If the father and son were of one mind in clearing up the rumors they should have acted together, gone to the grave site together, and issued a joint statement. The only acceptable reason for Joseph Jr.'s absence is that he was out of the town at the time, and Smith Sr. would have used this reason if it were so. We know Joseph Jr. was home as recently as September 22.

The newspaper statement was dated September 25. That leaves only 3 days after the audience with Moroni for the rumors of the grave robbing to become so virulent that Smith Sr. decided to put a stop to them. But rumors spreading far beyond the inner circle of money diggers would not crop up of their own accord after the audience. Shortly after dawn of September 22 it was already known by the Smiths that the audience was a failure. That would be an indication that Alvin's remains were not taken, if anything. So the rumors were based on more than speculation.

The disturbed grave clearly had something to do with Joseph Jr.'s audience with Moroni. The traditional interpretation of the statement has been that it was an incident of inexplicable malice, but that was before knowledge of the depth of Joseph Jr.'s occultism surfaced in the last 20 years.

WAS SOMEONE ELSE RESPONSIBLE?

Another aspect of Smith Sr.'s story which does not parse is the extreme haste with which he acted on September 25. On that day Smith Sr. purportedly rounded up the neighbors, disinterred Alvin's body, buried it and issued the statement attesting to the facts. That certainly would be physically possible, but the circumstances just mentioned weakened Smith's case considerably; i.e., the absence of Joseph Jr., lack of corroboration by the neighbors.

That these problems were not corrected in the ensuing weeks weakens it even further. But if Smith Sr. was suddenly confronted with an open grave and suspected that Joseph Jr. did it we can understand his actions. Who else would have done such a thing? If this was a prank it certainly was a nasty one. We have to consider the prank possibility, however.

The prank-if such it was vicious in its intent and extremely effective. The scenario unfolds this way: Someone close to Joseph Jr. who was motivated by jealousy at being left out of the golden plates project or by disgust regarding it,

dug up a considerable amount of earth knowing the blame would fall on Joseph Jr. The prankster would thus be calling attention to the necessity of Alvin's remains being a part of the scheme which would hold up the whole venture to scorn and Joseph Jr. to disgrace.

There are two objections to this theory. The first is that someone who knew the details of the first spirit visit and the requirements for the second and realized that Alvin's body could meet the requirements was in the inner circle of the money diggers. A disaffected member could probably be identified, and violent retaliation by the male Smith family members could not be ruled out.

Furthermore, none of them wanted to see Smith fail, as far as we know. After he "obtained" the plates they demanded their share or attempted to steal them outright, but they all recognized that Joseph Jr.'s access to the spirit was superior to their own.

The second and stronger objection is that if the prankster believed in the magic world view he would not have dug up the grave for such an unworthy purpose because that was exceedingly dangerous. In the activities of money-digging groups we are struck by how they declare to themselves, to each other, and to "spirits" that their motives are pure. They even kept their thoughts pure while digging, and even then proceeded with fear if they felt they were possibly offending an evil spirit.

The occult viewpoint considered that spirits of the dead never liked to be annoyed or even summoned. Necromancers, especially those who worked directly with the corpse, had to have worthy goals to dominate the recalcitrant spirit through force of will⁶⁸. A prankster who uncovered the grave would be desecrating Alvin's corpse, slandering Alvin's brother and mocking the golden plates venture. Alvin's dying words to his brother were, "Do everything in your power to obtain the record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given to you."⁶⁹ Anyone who believed in the possibility of Alvin's spirit taking retribution would be unlikely to challenge all that.

Besides these objections, we can refer to the newspaper notice. If we take the prankster theory seriously, this is where the absence of Joseph Jr. hurts the most. He, not Joseph Sr., would have been the outraged victim and likely would have been the driving force behind the investigation. He would-or should-have explained why he was not the perpetrator. It was not a situation that fell into a legal context. (Innocent until proven guilty).

If Joseph Jr. was being maligned unfairly and publicly as a ghoul he should have issued an icy retort, branded his accusers as contemptible, and only then said no more. He certainly was not a timid young man. Instead, the statement that was released was given solely from the father's perspective. Joseph Jr.'s absence from the statement does not seem like dignified silence. It seems like a tacit admission of guilt to what the rumors attest.

CEREMONIAL MAGIC

It is certain that the Smiths talked over the problem beforehand of satisfying Moroni's requirements and considered their options. (Historian Jan Shipps has demonstrated that the Smiths regarded the golden plates as a family project. Her book⁷⁰ analyzes the preliminary manuscript by Mother Smith which gave rise to her book published in 1853.) They were dealing with ceremonial magic, which is the art of dealing with spirits. Summoning a spirit required a formalized ritual with many exacting rules.

The money diggers were already attempting to follow ritual rules correctly with their well-documented use of consecrated circles, swords, animal sacrifices to spirits, etc.⁷¹ They learned their rites from various occult source books, some of which we have been able to identify because of tangible evidence the Smiths left behind.

Dr. Quinn has done a superb job of studying the Smiths' magic implements, especially the parchments, and analyzing their intricate symbolism. He has shown that the parchments were copied directly from occult books by Ebenezer Sibly, Reginald Scot, Francis Barrett, and Cornelius Agrippa. Quinn names the books and even their editions.

⁶⁸ Richard Cavendish, editor, *Man, Myth And Magic*, 1983, Vol. 7, p.1953

⁶⁹ Lucy Mack Smith, *ibid.* p.81

⁷⁰ *Mormonism, The Story Of A New Religious Tradition*

⁷¹ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic And Masonry*, Modern Microfilm, 1983, p.31-34

Joseph, Jr. eventually became quite diligent about following correct rubrics, to the point that by 1827 he presented an eerie sight when he went to meet Moroni. (He dressed himself entirely in black and rode “a black horse, with a switch tail⁷² under a full moon because Moroni—or a passage from an occult book—required it.)

In 1823, however, his expertise was apparently still spotty, for he made an assumption that clouded his recognition of the being with whom he was communing. Joseph considered Moroni to be “an angel,” but Moroni had described himself as the spirit of a mortal man who had lived in the region many centuries ago. This should have alerted Joseph that he was dealing with a departed spirit and that he had to carry out the appropriate rituals described in the occult books he had accepted as truthful.

MAGIC: NECESSITY OF A PARTNER

Someone who wanted to evoke the spirit of a dead man was supposed to perform the ritual with the help of a partner or apprentice. One of Smith’s source books⁷³, stated this several times in the most uncompromising way. In one chapter entitled “The Forms of Adjuring or Citing of the Spirit Aforesaid to Arise and Appear,” appears: “...rehearse in your own name, and your companions for one must always be with you. This Prayer following ...”⁷⁴ The statement is repeated⁷⁵ and the author even reiterates it in a separate note in the margin: *For the conjuror ... can do nothing to any purpose without his confederate.*

On the preceding page of Scot’s book are complex magic circles (“The Seals of the Earth”) that the Smiths copied on to their “Holiness to the Lord” parchment. (To be precise, their drawing was copied from Sibly’s book which borrowed heavily from Scot, including the two seals. Dr. Quinn has shown that the Smith family used both books.) The page is the beginning of a chapter entitled “An Experiment of the Dead.” The same “booke” describes how to call a spirit into a crystal stone so that visions may be seen. Obviously, these passages must have often been studied by the Smiths, especially Joseph Jr. (Joseph Jr. sought treasure, saw spirits, and allegedly translated the golden plates, all by visions in his seer stones.)

There is a discussion on the use of the two Seals of the Earth⁷⁶ and says the magician “must have a companion with him when questioning the spirit of an ordinary man by opening the grave.” We belabor this point to show that the Smiths should have been aware of the necessity of a companion for Joseph Jr. in the audience with Moroni. This seems to be the reason Moroni demanded the presence of someone besides Joseph in all the equinox rites we know about, (Joseph’s first experience with Moroni took place in his bedroom, the night before he first went to Hill Cumorah to get the plates with Moroni’s help. No companion is mentioned. Joseph underwent a rite in which he tried to contact “some kind of heavenly messenger.”⁷⁷ Quinn implies the ritual was one described in Scot’s *Discoverie Of Witchcraft* to conjure the spirits Paymon, Bathin and Barma.⁷⁸ They were fallen angels, not dead men. Instead, Moroni appeared, but not on Joseph’s initiative. But after that first meeting Joseph should have known that a companion was required. Even if the companion was different each time. (Alvin in 1824, Samuel Lawrence in 1825 or 1826, Joseph’s new wife Emma in 1827).

MAGIC “A COMMANDMENT OF GOD”

The Smiths took this requirement of Moroni’s so seriously that they considered it “a commandment of God.” The commandments of God that Moroni gave Smith from 1826 to 1827 were not from the Bible. They weren’t even religious. By and large, they were rubrics that were consistent with centuries of ceremonial magic. During Smith’s first visit to the Hill, on September 22, 1823, he reached out and picked up the plates. Then he made his blunder of setting them aside temporarily and the plates slipped back into the hole beneath the stone. When he attempted to recover them, he was rebuffed by a being that was “something like a toad”, i.e., the infamous salamander. “Therefore I cried out unto the Lord in the agony of my soul, ‘Why can I not obtain them?’ Behold the angel

⁷² E.D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*; 1834, citing Willard Chase; pg. 242

⁷³ Reginald Scot, *Discoverie Of Witchcraft*, Southern Illinois Univ. Press, Carbondale, 1964

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, Chapter 13, pg. 238

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pg. 244

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, pg. 218

⁷⁷ Quinn, *ibid.*, p.118

⁷⁸ Scot, *ibid.*, p.120

appeared unto me again and said unto me, ‘You have not kept the commandments of the Lord which I gave unto you. Therefore you cannot not obtain them.’”⁷⁹

Apparently the commandment that Smith had broken was Moroni’s order that once having picked up the plates he was not to lay them down. He was to immediately wrap them in a white linen napkin and take them straightway home and deposit them in a fine chest. A corollary to this ritual demand was that he should have an eye “single to the glory of God”.

Joseph’s mother understood the meaning of these injunctions. She wrote, “The angel told Joseph that the time had not yet come for the plates to be brought forth to the world, that he could not take them from the place wherein they were deposited until he had learned to keep the commandments of God—not only till he was willing but able to do it.”⁸⁰

Thus the “commandments of God” referred to rituals and attitudes. This fits with all magic grimoires (workbooks). In his first appearance on the hill Moroni issued an additional commandment, that Alvin was to accompany Joseph next year, 1824.

The procurement of a substitute Alvin begins to look more like an absolute obligation by the late summer of 1824. Lucy Mack Smith wrote of this time, “... and supposing at this time that the only thing required, in order to possess them (the plates) until the time for their translation was to be able to keep the commandments of God—and he firmly believed he could keep every commandment which had been given him—he fully expected to carry them home with him.”⁸¹

Evidently, the Smiths had made some arrangement about the requirement for Alvin’s presence. It most likely did not involve a family decision to use Alvin’s body because the fact of the opened grave seemed to catch them so badly off guard. However, when we reread Alvin’s dying injunction to Joseph Jr. it appears that Alvin virtually sanctioned Joseph to bring his remains to the Hill if the need arose: “Do everything that lies within your power to obtain the record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given to you.” When the requirement of Alvin’s presence proved to be a stumbling block, Joseph had only to recall Alvin’s words of solemn urgency for all the permission he would need.

MAGIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE RITE

Was there anything else impelling Joseph to take such a drastic step? We have only to look through the books that we know the Smiths were so familiar with. The books referred to are *De Occulta Philosophia* by Cornelius Agrippa, *The Fourth Book [Of Agrippa]* (allegedly),⁸² *The Magus* by Francis Barrett, *A New And Complete Illustration Of The Occult Sciences* by Ebenezer Sibly, and two books bound together and authored by Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie Of Witchcraft/A Discourse Concerning Devils And Spirits*. The Smiths did not simply use isolated pages from these books because the books are a treasure trove of references, anecdotes, and doctrines which cropped up in early Mormonism as set down by Joseph Smith.

The books quoted each other and borrowed from the same tradition—the occult lore of western Europe as set down in the 15th and 16th centuries. ALL of these books spoke of necromancy, from terse comments to elaborate instructions given in unsavory detail. All of the authors seemed to have a perverse fascination with the topic. None of them were comfortable with it. They were able to discourse easily enough about conjuring up evil spirits but to call back a living spirit into a rotting corpse seemed to affect the human psyche in a profound way—it was thrilling, repellent, and sinister.

Most of the writers denounced the practice—but sometimes the denunciation seemed pro forma and was given with a wink to let the reader know how potent the practice was. (Scot’s *Discourse...* is an exception. It contains a long condemnation of the practice, based on theological truths, which can hardly be improved upon.)

Nevertheless, they conceded that necromancy performed upon the corpse was consummate Black Magic, or more properly, The Black Art. The practice was more or less codified by the time of the Renaissance and was known as

⁷⁹ Quinn, *Early Mormonism And The Magic World View*, 1987, pg. 123, cites *History Of The Church* et al.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, Lucy Mack Smith, p. 81

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.83

⁸² It is now acknowledged that *The Fourth Book Of Agrippa* is a forgery, similar in style to the three authentic books by Agrippa

The Ritual of Necromantic Evocation. It is described exclusively in Sibly. The rite is described guardedly in *The Fourth Book* and in *The Magus* which quotes “Agrippa’s *Fourth Book* extensively. The Ritual of Necromantic Evocation was for the questioning of the spirit-or of the corpse itself. This, of course, was not Joseph’s motive in recalling Alvin. But the ritual taught how to get the soul back into the corpse and this did suit Joseph. He did not want an amulet of flesh that was dead and useless.

A.E. Waite, occultist, summarized the pertinent passages from Agrippa’s *Fourth Book* (quoted in *The Magus*) and noted: “The more intimate the knowledge possessed by the operator concerning the deceased person, the more easily he was supposed to call him up.”⁸³ Alvin certainly qualified to be exorcised by his brother.

Folklore also decreed that “the shade of the departed lingered in the vicinity of its grave for a period of 12 months.”⁸⁴ Again, Alvin qualified.

According to both Agrippa and Barren the soul may be raised from the corpse only if the deceased was known to be evil, or to have died violently or prematurely, or if he wasn’t buried properly. Now, Alvin was buried correctly-but he died prematurely. Any early death enhanced the magical value of human flesh, since it could then be assumed to contain some element of unconsumed vitality.⁸⁵

Alvin also was “known to be evil”. At Alvin’s burial, the pastor alienated the Smiths by inferring that Alvin was damned because he was not a good church member due to his money digging. (Years later, in the Kirtland temple, Joseph Smith related a vision of Alvin in the LDS Celestial Kingdom.) The Smiths might have rejected this graceless assessment but, oddly enough, this official pronouncement from a religious authority undoubtedly reassured Joseph that Alvin was in the correct category to be useful, necromantically speaking. Once more, Alvin qualified.

Scot writes: “When desires and lusts, after Wife, or Children, House, Lands or money, is very strong at their departure, it is a certain truth, that this same spirit .. will be hankering after these things, and drawn back by the strong desires and fixations of the imagination, which is left behind it, Nor can it ever be at rest, till the thing be accomplished, for which it is disturbed. When treasure hath been hid, or any secret thing ... there is a magical cause of something attracting the [spirit] back again.”⁸⁶

Alvin’s deathbed interest in the golden plates would make it much easier to attract his spirit back to his corpse if the necromancer had that venture in mind. Alvin qualified ‘perfectly. Thus, on many counts, Joseph was eminently qualified to call Alvin back into his corpse and Alvin was an ideal candidate to respond.

Other comments about the practice from *The Magus*: Necromancy has its name because it works on the bodies of the dead, ...alluring them into the carcasses of the dead by certain hellish charms, and infernal invocations, and by deadly sacrifices and wicked oblations. (“Oblations” refers in this case to various potions which always included men’s or animal’s blood.) There are two kinds of necromancy: raising the carcasses, which is not done without blood,...”⁸⁷ This message adopts a disapproving attitude toward the rite but this is negated at the end when Barrett writes: “by what influences the body may be knit together again for the raising of the dead, requires all these things which belong not to men but to God only, and to whom he will communicate them.” In other words, this stuff is out-of-bounds-except to those chosen by God.

MAGIC NECESSITY OF BLOOD

The messages just quoted indicate an new ingredient not previously discussed-the necessity of fresh blood to be a part of any rite calling the spirit back into the body. The various books are emphatic on this point.⁸⁸ “In the raising therefore of these shadows, we are to perfume with new blood the bones of the dead.” This tradition is ancient. Homer, in 800 B.C., was familiar with it. (Antiquities specialist E.O. James comments in *Origins Of Sacrifice*: “Letting blood drip over a corpse is to strengthen the deceased in the grave. In classical mythology it is this belief

⁸³ A.E. Waite, *Book Of Ceremonial Magic*, 1961 ed., p.324

⁸⁴ Sarah Litvinoff, *The Illustrated Guide To The Supernatural*, 1986; and many other encyclopedias.)

⁸⁵ Richard Cavendish, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pg. 1954

⁸⁶ Reginald Scot, *A Discourse Concerning Devils And Spirits*, 1665; the later edition, p.41. This book is bound with Scot’s *The Discoverie Of Witchcraft*

⁸⁷ Francis Barren, *The Magus*, 1801, reprint edition by University Books, 1967; Book 11, Part 1, p.69

⁸⁸ *The Magus*, Book 11 Part II, and also Agrippa’s *Fourth Book*, p. 123

which is expressed in the story of the visit of Odysseus to the underworld ... Here he dug a trench and poured into it the blood of black victims and soon the shades gathered around clamoring for blood ... they slowly revived and became animated.” The animal sacrifices that Smith made during treasure digging were usually described as black dogs and black sheep.⁸⁹

Magicians regarded fresh blood as so potent that it even overrode other defects in the Ritual of Evocation. Scot’s *Discourse*...gives an example⁹⁰ of conjuring up infernal spirits in which a “fumigation” made up of sulfur, various unguents, and a mixture of man’s blood and the blood of a black cat, “which mixtures are said to be exceedingly magical so that without any other addition, they say, this fumigation is able of itself to make such spirits appear before the exorcist.”

So it would seem that once Joseph acquired what he needed from the corpse he had to “activate” it with fresh blood. The question as to how Smith acquired the blood is not hard to answer. Waite says blood is “indispensable.”⁹¹ The question as to how Smith acquired the blood is not hard to answer. Joseph could have simply nicked his finger with his ceremonial dagger and squeezed out a drop of blood to fall onto what was probably the severed hand of the corpse. It would not be the first time that Joseph had spilled fresh blood during a ritual. He had probably used his own blood often since various rites described by Agrippa and Scot required the blood of the practitioner for the drawing of circles and “angelic characters.”

Whether Joseph Jr. used his own blood or any blood on Alvin, it is hard to say because the Rite involving the corpse referred to is not the rite that Joseph was performing.

The Ritual of Necromantic Evocation effected the whole corpse and the idea was to call the soul back into the body for a short time so that it could answer questions. Joseph’s reason for securing Alvin’s remains was entirely different. He wanted to take a piece of Alvin to Hill Cumorah, because Moroni required Alvin’s presence. We mention blood because the Smith’s various occult books made it clear that blood was so effective in enlivening a corpse with the soul of its owner. It would be a logical move for Joseph to make and one he shouldn’t have shrunk from since he had done it while treasure digging.

Agrippa⁹² directly addresses Joseph’s situation when it tells how to call a spirit back into a portion of the corpse: “From hence it is, that the souls of the dead are not to be called up without blood, or by the application of some part of their relict body.” The next page⁹³ amplifies this: “...it behooveth us to take to whatsoever place is to be chosen, some principal part of the body that is relict, and therewith make a perfume in due manner, and to perform other component rites.”

Once the “principle part of the body that is relict” was obtained, the practitioner had other duties to perform, which included fresh blood. Blood was always the *ne plus ultra*. From *The Magus*: “For there are in the blood certain vital powers, [this is] no less wonderful than true.”⁹⁴ To perceive blood this way was to discover the key which would convert part of the corpse into a true talisman. To an ambitious neophyte magician like young Joseph such a simple, dramatic and effective tool must have seemed irresistible. Its significance was not subtle, such as the distinction as to whether Moroni was a holy angel or the spirit of a dead man. So the use of blood by Joseph seems extremely likely, but ultimately speculative.

SMITH SR. COPING WITH THE SITUATION

By now it has become obvious who opened Alvin’s grave. Joseph Jr. must have regarded such a task with distaste but was by now consumed in a quest that he regarded as having divine sanction. Joseph might have dug up the body a day or so before the meeting, or on the night of September 21, or even directly afterwards in a last desperate attempt to assuage Moroni.

The latter scenario best fits the circumstances and would have unfolded like this: Smith Jr.’s disappointing audience with Moroni followed by an impulsive decision to unearth the corpse. Moroni refusing the too-late gesture. Smith

⁸⁹ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic And Masonry*, Modern Microfilm, 1983, p.32-34

⁹⁰ Scott. *Discourse*..., pg. 67

⁹¹ Waite, *ibid.*, p.324

⁹² Agrippa, *Fourth Book*, p. 123

⁹³ *ibid.*, pg. 124

⁹⁴ Barrett, Book II, Part 1, p.16

Sr. confronted with knowledge of the desecrated grave and a crises which threatened to besmirch the family name. A depressed and ashamed Joseph Jr. removing himself from the affair. Smith Sr. taking the high road and doggedly declaring that nothing was amiss.

We will proceed on the assumption that the father knew first hand that Joseph, Jr. had opened the grave. All of the contradictions in the newspaper statement then make sense.

An immediate explanation to the public was needed. Maybe Smith Sr. first tried taking responsibility for the deed himself by telling the first sensation seekers that he had heard the rumors too, so he had gone out and disinterred the body but found nothing wrong.

Maybe he blamed the deed on a prankster and then actually went with neighbors supposedly to see if the body was still there. It seems evident that at some point Smith Sr. did visit the grave site with others to resolve the situation, but the orderly steps described in the statement don't seem credible. If this investigation did occur, it was slapdash, at best.

We have only Smith Sr.'s word that the body was not disturbed. If his son had opened the grave then Smith Sr. was also confronted with a pried open coffin and a mutilated corpse. Maybe Joseph Jr. had replaced the coffin lid, after a fashion. Maybe the mutilation was minimal. Maybe only a finger was used. But the requirements would be fulfilled with more certainty by an entire hand. (Agrippa recommended "a principle part of the body", and goetic practitioners were conscious of decorum. To gouge out a chunk of flesh indiscriminately was unseemly. Taking an organic entity was preferable, and the hand was "nobler" than the foot. There even existed a tradition of obtaining a hand from a corpse. This was the "Hand of Glory," cherished by thieves since the Middle Ages.)

If Smith did uncover the corpse in front of bystanders it would not be hard for him to be the first and only one to examine the corpse and then announce his findings. We have no proof of mutilation but we are asserting it as a probability because the circumstantial evidence is so compelling. Once the momentous decision had been made to turn the first shovel of dirt it seems unlikely that Joseph Jr. turned back. In his own mind, it was an utterly serious and worthy task. Maybe Smith Jr. had made only a desultory effort at covering the coffin and some of the neighbors helped to re-cover the body properly.

Any of these situations could be explained by Smith Sr. with superficial glibness. Maybe some of the neighbors believed him and some didn't. But someone would have to challenge Smith's version if they wanted to disprove it and evidently no one had the stomach to do that. Even those who did not believe him could appreciate that he was caught in a bad situation that was not of his own making.

SUMMATION

We can declare dogmatically: 1) That the incident which prompted Smith's statement was related to Joseph Jr.'s audience with Moroni. 2) The grave was disturbed. 3) The same occult world view that allowed Joseph Jr. to invoke Moroni would have allowed him to substitute some of Alvin's remains for the living Alvin. 4) Alvin's presence was a "commandment of God", and Joseph was splendidly qualified to effect that presence. 5) The statement in the Wayne Sentinel is suspect.

Taking all this into account, we can confidently observe that the only interpretation of the notice that makes sense is that Smith Sr. knew his son was responsible for violating Alvin's grave and was trying to conceal the fact.

As for piecing together the details we have to rely on what we know about the Smiths at this time and make educated guesses. Choosing what details to accept as the most logical does not really change the gist of the incident. Whether Smith Jr. walked to the Hill Cumorah or rode on horseback, whether he took a shovel along or not, may never be known. That is why we have prefaced descriptions of the details with "probably", "likely", and "maybe."

These adverbs are chosen to convey the degree of the author's certainty of what occurred. We have avoided presenting a scenario as possible just because there is no evidence to the contrary. Suggestions have been offered in which any one of several possible actions to support our thesis. For instance, we cannot state dogmatically whether Joseph Jr. unearthed the corpse just before or just after the audience with Moroni. But either case is more likely than what is implied in the notice: that no such thing happened. The final summary will set aside these qualifying adverbs and give the author's version of what probably happened.

We can now flesh out this interpretation of the events of September 22, 1824. Joseph Jr., his family, and the inner circle of money diggers knew long before hand that Alvin's death changed the portents for the 1824 rite. They hoped that the spirit would accept the death as a reasonable excuse for Alvin's absence. The family talked over the problem and on the night of September 21 they dressed Joseph Jr. in Alvin's clothing with Alvin's personal articles in the pockets.

Joseph Jr. set out for the Hill Cumorah on foot, shortly after 10 pm under a full moon. He carried his ceremonial dagger and robes with him. Most of the family stayed up all night awaiting the results. Joseph performed the ceremony of conjuration and at midnight Moroni appeared. When Joseph was informed that without Alvin he could not have the plates he concluded this was a problem he could solve. He quietly returned home, surreptitiously picked up a shovel and hurried to the grave site.

With roiling emotions, he dug up the corpse murmuring prayers and incantations the whole time. He took what he needed and hastily recovered the corpse. He returned to the Hill Cumorah and implored Moroni for another audience. Moroni either did not appear at all or else told Smith that his effort was useless, to try again the following year. (Ceremonial magic included rules of timing and preparation. Smith had advanced part way through the ceremony with Moroni but was brought up short when Moroni inquired after Alvin. If Smith thought he could go off for a few hours to solve the problem and pick up again where he left off, he was mistaken.) He returned home after dawn, physically and emotionally exhausted. He told his family the entire train of events, of failure at every turn, and fell into bed.

Smith Sr. went out in the sunlight to pack down the earth around Alvin's grave as neatly as possible. Other money diggers, intensely curious, came to the Smith home and were told of Joseph's failure. They learned then, or very shortly afterward, that Alvin's grave had been violated. They knew who had done it and why. This development was so sensational and so impossible to keep secret that they started bruiting the tale around the countryside. Within a day or two the appalling rumors begin to reach the Smith family. Smith Sr. was confronted with an impossible situation. Joseph Jr. had acted rashly but he was only doing his best in a project that involved the entire family.

Soon the senior Smith launched his charade and issued his forlorn newspaper notice which pasted a fig leaf of propriety over the whole affair. The episode might seem bizarre to those who read about it 164 years later but to Smith Sr. it seemed like a reasonable thing to do at the time. Likewise with his son. His actions might seem horrific today but they seemed perfectly rational to Joseph, Jr.

PUTTING THE FACTS IN PERSPECTIVE

One objection that will be made against this paper are the physical demands made on Joseph Smith Jr. The Smiths were poor and did not seem to own any horses for travel Joseph probably trekked all night on foot. As a child, Joseph suffered a severe shinbone infection which left him with a lifelong limp. This did not hamper his ability to walk long distances and he was reported to have done so for most of his life. He was a robust young man. Almost 19 years old, he would be at the peak of his physical powers.

Referring to the map, we can see that the three point axis of Joseph's route on September 21-22 was connected then, as now, by a fine road in level country. The Hill Cumorah was just 150 feet high and the site of the audience was 100 yards from the road. Joseph walked 2_ miles from his home to the hill. He was told by Moroni that without Alvin there would be no plates; this was probably shortly after midnight.

Then, according to our thesis, he walked 2_ miles back home to pick up a shovel. He walked 1_ miles to the cemetery. He spent an hour or more unearthing the coffin. He spent half an hour re-covering it. He was tired but barely aware of it because he was ready to complete his task which had to be finished before dawn. It was already approaching 4 am. He rapidly walked four miles back to Cumorah. Then he met failure a second time. He straggled home as the sun rose, having covered 14 miles on foot and engaged in at least an hour of furious digging. In addition, he may have undergone a modified fast for a couple of days, since that was common in ceremonial magic. Clearly, this was a physical trial that would tax Joseph nearly to his limit.

Happily, we are able to propound this as within Joseph's ability because his mother devoted four pages of her book to describing a very similar ordeal undertaken almost 5 years later⁹⁵. Smith was under terrible stress at the time.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, Lucy Mack Smith, pp. 124-127

Against his better judgment, Smith had allowed Martin Harris to go off on a trip for a few days while carrying the only copy of the translation of the plates. Smith had not heard from Harris for three weeks and was in great anxiety.

In the same period, Emma had given birth to their first child. The child was stillborn and Emma hovered near death. Joseph was forced, nevertheless, to take a stagecoach to check on Harris. After traveling many hours without food or sleep he disembarked the stage at 10 pm. He walked twenty miles through a forest, finally arriving at his destination just before dawn. He needed the help of a stranger to lead him by the hand for the last four miles, but this journey seems even more daunting than the earlier one.

THE STARTLING MARTIN HARRIS LETTER

One might wonder how something as amazing as a salamander or “something like a toad,” to use Joseph’s words, could have prevented him from recovering the plates on September 22, 1823. While Joseph Smith-History fails to record the incident, a letter written by Martin Harris, the first convert to Mormonism, later reveals the episode.

Palmyra Oct 23d 1830 Dear Sir,

Your letter of yesterday is received & I hasten to answer as fully as I can--Joseph Smith Jr first came to my notice in the year 1824 in the summer of that year I contracted with his father to build a fence on my property in the corse of that work I aproach Joseph & ask how it is in a half day you put up what requires your father & 2 brothers a full day working together he says I have not been without assistance but cannot say more only you better find out

the next day I take the older Smith by the arm & he says Joseph can see anything he wishes by looking at a stone Joseph often sees Spirits here with great kettles of coin money it was Spirits who brought up such because Joseph made no attempt on their money I latter dream I converse with Spirits which let me count their money when I awake I have in my hand a dollar coin which I take for a sign Joseph describes what I seen in every particular says he the spirits are grieved so I through (threw) back the dollar

In the fall of the year 1827 I hear Joseph found a gold bible I take Joseph aside & he says it is true I found it 4 years ago (1823) with my stone but only just got it because of the enchantment the old spirit came to me 3 times in the same dream & says dig up the gold but when I take it up the next morning the spirit transfigured himself from a white salamander in the bottom of the hole & struck me 3 times & held the treasure & would not let me have it because I lay(laid) it down to cover over the hole when the spirit says do not lay it down Joseph says when can I have it the spirit says one year from today if you obay me look to the stone after a few days he looks the spirit says bring your brother Alvin Joseph says he is dead shall I bring what remains but the spirit is gone Joseph goes to get the gold bible but the spirit says you did not bring your brother you can not have it look to the stone Joseph looks but cannot see who to bring the spirit says I tricked you again look to the stone Joseph looks to the stone & sees his wife on the 22 day of Sept 1827 they get the gold bible I give Joseph \$50 to move him down to Pa Joseph says when you visit us I will give you a sign he gives me some hiroglyphics I take them to Utica Albany and New York in the last place (NY) Dr. Mitchel gives me a introduction to Professor Anthon says he they are shorthand Egyptian the same what was used in ancient times bring me the old book & I will translate says I it is made of precious gold & is sealed from view says he I can not read a sealed book -----

Joseph found some giant silver spectacles with the plates he puts them in a old hat & in the darkness reads the words & in this way it is all translated & written down about the middle of June 1829 Joseph takes me together with Oliver Cowdry & David Whitmer to have a view of the plates

our names are appended to the Book of Mormon which I had printed with my own money-space and time both prevent me from writing more at present if there is any thing further you wish to inquire I shall attend to it

Yours Respectfully W W Phelps Esq Martin Harris

EXPERTS SAY LETTER IS AUTHENTIC

For years, historians within the Church suspected the existence of the letter and concluded that it was a forgery and a fraud. However, confronted with the original letter, the Church has been forced to reconsider its earlier position. An article appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* by Religion Writer, John Dart, which follows, records the official response to the letter.

A leading expert on Mormon documents termed the letter as “authentic” and indicates Joseph Smith was involved with magic and treasure-digging at the time he was said to have had religious revelations leading to the Book of Mormon.

The letter, dated Oct. 23, 1830, was written by Martin Harris challenges the official church accounts that say an angel named Moroni delayed Smith from obtaining the golden plates in 1823 that were the basis for the Book of Mormon. Instead, Harris says in his letter that the young Smith encountered an antagonistic salamander/spirit upon discovering the plates.

The salamander, which the letter said transformed itself into “an old spirit” and struck Smith three times, was considered then to be a creature with magical powers.

Non-Mormon critics have long claimed that Smith was preoccupied with using occult methods to search for buried riches and that only later did he interpret his activities as religious experiences. Recent books on Smith and on the church’s origins have already started to alter the traditional saintly portrait of the founder as a religious prophet unaffected by the culture of his day.

Historians say, however, that the Harris letter is the first early writing by one of the movement’s principal figures to shed light on Smith’s initial descriptions of his experiences.

The Harris letter was found in a stamp collection in late 1983 and purchased in 1986 by Salt Lake City businessman Steven Christensen, who is also a Mormon bishop. He commissioned historians Dean C. Jessee and Ronald W. Walker to determine its authenticity. Both researchers are associated with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History at the church-run Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

In a paper read at the Mormon History Assn.’s annual meeting here, Jessee said, “On the basis of the paper, ink and handwriting, the Harris letter appears authentic.”

The oval, double-line Palmyra, N.Y., postmark matched precisely those used there between 1829 and 1834, he added. Although very few other examples of Harris’ handwriting were available, “there is enough to identify the 1830 letter as an authentic sample of his writing,” said Jessee, a former church archivist frequently consulted in the last decade for his handwriting analyses.⁹⁶

OFFICIAL COMMENT

The first official church comment on the document, issued this week, was cautious. “At this point, we accept the judgment of the examiner (Jessee) that there is no indication that it is a forgery,” said Gordon Hinckley, second counselor to church President Spencer W. Kimball. “This does not preclude the possibility that it may have been forged at a time when the church had many enemies. It is, however, an interesting document of the times,” Hinckley said in a statement. Both Jessee and Walker attempted Thursday night to picture Smith’s mixture of religious and folk magic interests as typical of his period and region. American “money diggers” had sought fabled coins in mines since the Colonial period, Walker said:

They placed faith in conjuring common elemental spirits ... dreams, seeric gifts and enchanted treasure,” he said. Walker said Hill Cumorah, a site in Palmyra sacred to Mormon history because Smith is supposed to have found the plates there, was a popular money-digging spot before and after Smith’s claim. The Harris letter also said Smith found some “giant silver spectacles with the plates (and) he puts them in an old hat & in the darkness reads the words & in this way it is all translated and written down.” The standard Mormon Church account says that Smith used “seer stones” to translate the plates but mentions nothing about an old hat. The Harris letter was addressed to William W. Phelps, the editor of a newspaper in Canandaigua, N.Y., a man who was soon to become an ardent believer in Mormonism. Jessee pointed out that apparently neither

⁹⁶ Los Angeles Times, article by John Dart

Harris nor Phelps perceived Smith's tale as 'out of the ordinary.' That readers in our time do, probably tells more about our present mind-set than anything else.

FURTHER EXPERT TESTIMONY

"The Harris letter reveals that Joseph claimed to have known for several years about the gold bible which he had learned by "looking in the stone." The Chase affidavit states "I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat After obtaining the stone (from Chase) he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1827, JOSEPH SMITH Sr., related to me the following story: That some years ago a spirit had appeared to Joseph [Smith Jr.] his son, in a vision, and informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold, and that he was the person to obtain them He repaired to the place of deposit and demanded the book. After obtaining the book, then placing it back on the stone, he attempted to get it a second time and was HINDERED. He saw in the box something LIKE A TOAD which assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of the head ... (and then) struck again and knocked him three or four rods he enquired why he could not obtain the plates; to which the spirit made reply, because you have not obeyed orders."⁹⁷

Following the disclosure of the existence of the "white salamander" letter, much uproar came forth from Salt Lake City. A great deal of obfuscation came from the individual that supplied the letter. Mark Hofman, soon to become infamous for a murderous bombing attack, became a convenient target for Mormons, determined to preserve the illusion of Moroni, discloser of the plates. Regardless of Hofman's infamy, the truth of the letter became evident to even the most reluctant believer.

What possible connection could a salamander have to do with the gaining the golden plates, one might ask? Well, if we examine some of the books that explore occultism we begin to broaden our knowledge. A salamander is described as "an elemental of fire."⁹⁸ An elemental is further described as "A spirit evolved in and from, and inhabiting one of the four elements; a sylph (spirit of the air), a gnome (spirit of the earth), a salamander (spirit of fire), or an undine (spirit of the water). (ibid., pg. 55) Occultists regard elementals as beings having substance, but visible only to those who have inner sight; some elementals are benign, others are malignant.

Because salamanders could withstand great heat they could be found in smelters for refining and were associated with gold. Occultists in the 1800s believed that they guarded caches of hidden gold. From the above definitions it is easy to see how a salamander could transfigure himself into an "old spirit."

Helen P. Blavetsky and the Theosophical Society use the word "elementary" to refer to "the disembodied souls of the depraved." As a footnote, twentieth-century treasure hunters still associated salamanders with hidden treasure.

In December 1984, when Mario Angelucci, 67, found a two-tailed lizard as he was repairing the foundations of his house near Florence, Italy, he was convinced it was a sign of good luck. He refused to hand it over to biologists at the local university and wouldn't even let them near his house. With his lizard nearby, Angelucci dreamed one night that Roman soldiers from 2000 years ago were marching past his house. One of them said to him, "Go 15 meters into your field behind your house and dig down 60 centimeters." As soon as he awoke, Angelucci grabbed a shovel and followed instructions. He found a hoard of Roman coins, valued at \$50,000. "I knew that lizard was a good luck sign," he said. "I might never have believed the dream if I hadn't believed in the powers of a lizard with two tails."⁹⁹

Does this story sound similar to Joseph Smith and his salamander? What is this connection between lizards, salamanders and buried treasures? Maybe a white salamander is not such a strange companion for someone who used occult methods to hunt for buried treasures.

GUILTY! NEXT CASE!

It was charged that Joseph Smith was accused and found guilt of parting a local farmer from his money in a less than honest scheme, commonly known as money digging or glass looking. It was reported to have been an activity that brought him rebuke from his soon-to-be father-in-law, Isaac Hale. It is also historically recorded that he was

⁹⁷ Eber D. Howe, *Testimony of Willard Chase*, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 1834, page 240

⁹⁸ Frank Gaynor: *Dictionary of Mysticism*, pg. 160

⁹⁹ *Fate Magazine*, January, 1986

removed from membership in a local Methodist church because of the activity and trial results. Joseph Smith skims over the specific event leading to the trial in the Pearl of Great Price¹⁰⁰ explaining that he was only a day worker for the man so engaged and not personally involved. Mormon writers have continually challenged its doubters to find the records (seemingly lost) and prove Joseph Smith a liar or stop the attacks. Mormon writer Hugh Nibley, the most prolific defender of the Mormon faith, used almost 20 pages in his book *The Mythmakers*, in an attempt to discredit this “alleged” court trial. On page 142 we find:

“... If this court record is authentic it is the most damning evidence in existence against Joseph Smith” and would be “the most devastating blow to Smith ever delivered.”

Of course when that was first published back in 1961, Dr. Nibley undoubtedly felt that after 130 years no such record would turn up in 1971. Once again, the actual evidence, which the Mormon Church had denied ever existed came to light in 1971. You can read about how it was discovered as well as the relevance of other historical documents of that time that Joseph used a “seer” stone to find money, etc. in the 54 page brochure “Joseph Smith’s Bainbridge, N.Y., Court Trials.”

One might wonder why this should be cause for concern among investigators of Mormonism. The fact is the up to then, the Mormon Leaders had denied that there WAS such a trial. Indeed, they claim that the story of Joseph’s arrest was a “fabrication of unknown authorship and never in a court record at all.”¹⁰¹

The charge that Joseph was known to hunt treasure with “Peep” or “seer” stones, etc., was serious enough that Mormon scholar Francis W. Kirkham stated that if the court record could be found, it would show that the Mormon Church was false:

*Careful study of all facts regarding this alleged confession of Joseph Smith in a court of law that he had used a seer stone to find hidden treasure for purposes of fraud, must come to the conclusion that no such record was ever made, and therefore, is not in existence ... If any evidence had been in existence that Joseph Smith had used a seer stone for fraud and deception, and especially had he made this confession in a court of law as early as 1826, or four years before the Book of Mormon was printed, and this confession was in a court record, it would have been impossible for him to have organized the restored Church.*¹⁰²

Later, in the same book, Mr. Kirkham states:

... if a court record could be identified, and if it contained a confession by Joseph Smith which revealed him to be a poor, ignorant, deluded, and superstitious person unable himself to write a book of any consequence, and whose church could not endure because it attracted only similar persons of low mentality if such a court record confession could be identified and proved, then it follows that his believers must deny his claimed divine guidance which led them to follow him.... How could he be a prophet of God, the leader of the Restored Church to these tens of thousands, if he had been superstitious fraud which the pages from a book declared he confessed to be? (pp. 486-487)

Well, in spite of 140 years of silence, the records did surface. Rev. Wesley Walters discovered the documents in the basement of the Chenango County, New York jail house at Norwich, N.Y. in 1971. The records, affidavits, and other data show conclusively that Joseph Smith was arrested, went to trial, was found guilty as an imposter in the Stowell matter of “glass looking.” It is not a matter of debate, opinion or religious preference. It is a proven historical fact.

Initially Mormons denied that Joseph ever participated in “money digging” activities saying that would invalidate his claim as a prophet. Now that indisputable evidence confirms that Joseph was a convicted “money digger” Mormons have taken a “so what” attitude. At least one says, now that the evidence proves that Joseph was a “money digger” that it really doesn’t matter. (What could a BYU professor say?) Mormon scholar Marvin Hill says:

There may be little doubt now, as I have indicated elsewhere, that Joseph Smith was brought to trial in 1826 on a charge, not exactly clear, associated with money digging.. Brodie’s thesis that the prophet grew from necromancer to prophet assumes that the two were mutually exclusive, that if Smith were a money digger he

¹⁰⁰ JHS, 1:56

¹⁰¹ *Deseret News*, Church Section, May 11, 1946

¹⁰² *A New Witness for Christ in America*, Vol. 1, pp. 385-387

*could not have been religiously sincere. This does not necessarily follow. Many believers active in their churches, were money diggers in New England and western New York in this period. Few contemporaries regard these money diggers as irreligious, only implying so if their religious views seemed too radical... For the historian interested in Joseph Smith the man, it does not seem incongruous for him to have hunted for treasure with a seer stone and then to use with full faith to receive revelations from the Lord.*¹⁰³

Marvin Hill's appraisal of the treasure seeking activities make it appear that contemporaries of Joseph Smith treated this enterprise with a casual air. One such contemporary that was closer to Joseph than most, could hardly disguise his disdain. This was Isaac Hale, father of the girl that Joseph would later elope with. In an affidavit signed by Hale and published in the *Susquehanna Register*, May 1, 1834, Joseph's father-in-law said:

I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called 'money diggers'; and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by what means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. Smith and his father, with several other money diggers boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards. Young Smith made several visits at my house, and at length asked my consent to his marrying my daughter Emma. This I refused ... he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve.... Smith stated to me, that he had given up what he called 'glass looking,' and that he expected to work hard for a living... Soon after this, I was informed that they had brought a wonderful book of plates down with them... The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods.

“YOU JUST GOTTA’ BELIEVE!”

A further article by John Dart¹⁰⁴ records the Church's reaction to the publicity surrounding the letter. The article follows:

LETTER REVEALING MORMON FOUNDER'S BELIEF IN SPIRITS, OCCULT RELEASED

The Mormon Church on Friday released photographic copies of an 1825 letter written by church founder Joseph Smith Jr., the oldest ever found in his hand, in which he suggests occult methods for finding treasure guarded by “some clever spirit.” The letter thus adds new evidence that the origins of Mormonism were interwoven with magical lore.

Church leaders acknowledged only this week that they own the letter, whose contents were rumored as long as a year ago. Its release comes on the heels of the announcement last week at the Mormon History Assn. meeting that an 1830 letter written by Martin Harris, Mormonism's first follower, was authentic in spite of Harris' seemingly bizarre report that Smith told him a “white salamander” guarding the golden plates (later the basis for the Book of Mormon) in 1823 turned into an old spirit who fended off Smith, striking him three times.¹⁰⁵

The official Mormon story mentions no salamander, a mythical figure long familiar to occultists, but instead says that Smith was denied immediate possession of the plates by an angel named Moroni, who is depicted widely in Mormon statuary and paintings. Several prominent Mormon historians say that together the two letters establish Smith's involvement in popular folk magic and “money digging” during the 1820s when the young prophet later said he was receiving heavenly revelations.

But differences of opinion have emerged as to whether the uncomfortable mixture of magic, money-digging fads and religion will disturb the nearly 6 million followers of Mormonism or hinder the church's proselytizing efforts. The majority of Mormons would tend to trust church officials who have down played the implications for faith, some Mormon historians said. “Many people would rely on present church prophets for interpretation,” said Milton Beckman of Brigham Young University. But others, including Canadian historian Klaus Hansen of Queen's University, said that the historical implications of the letters are “potentially devastating.”

¹⁰³ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1972, pp. 77-78

¹⁰⁴ John Dart, *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1985

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

Valeen Avery, co-author of a new biography of Smith's first wife, Emma, said she thinks the letters will "cause a profound change (because) we can't say our history proves we are right." In other words, Avery said, "A missionary now approaches someone and says, 'I know the Mormon Church is true because an angel directed by God showed Joseph Smith golden plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon.'" The book, which complements the Bible in Mormon churches, tells of earlier civilizations in the Western Hemisphere and an appearance of the resurrected Jesus to some of them. Avery predicted that the church would increasingly de-emphasize the origins of the *Book of Mormon* and Smith's personality and start emphasizing what the church has to say.

"The [Los Angeles] *Times* obtained the first photocopy of the Smith letter earlier this week and learned that it was sold to the church about two years ago for a reported \$25,000. Dated June 18, 1825, five years before the *Book of Mormon* was published and the church was organized, the letter to Josiah Stowell of Bainbridge, N.Y., advised him about locating buried riches."

"You know the treasure must be guarded by some clever spirit," Smith said, "and if such (a spirit) is discovered, so also is the treasure."

Smith then gave instructions about using a "hasel stick" split down the middle to divine the presence of buried treasure. Smith said he was close to accepting an offer from Stowell and, indeed, Smith and his father signed a digging agreement on Nov. 1 that year with Stowell and three others.

With Smith himself writing matter-of-factly in 1825 about a "clever spirit" guarding buried treasure, the later Harris letter also gains credibility, said George D. Smith of San Francisco, an independent publisher of Mormon books. Some church members were starting to discount the Harris letter by speculating that Harris got the story wrong from young Smith, or had heard the salamander version from Smith's father instead. Smith's account in scripture¹⁰⁶ bears little resemblance to the text of his letter to Stowell (Stoal). After time for reflection, he states that the Stowell incident was the origin of "... the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger".

The publisher, one of four speakers on the Harris letter at the Mormon historians' meeting, asked, "If we say that the white salamander letter emerged from the occult culture of Joseph Smith's day, what about the origin of the church? Does the 1830 letter contain Joseph Smith's original story of obtaining the gold plates?"

The new findings and increasingly frank academic discussions of Smith's attitudes and practices are important not only for the 8.5 million-member Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints based in Salt Lake City, but also the 200,000-member Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Independence, Mo., and scores of small Mormon sects in North America. All claim Smith as their prophet in "restoring" the gospel in the "latter days" before Christ's return.

Charles Hamilton, a prominent New York City autograph collector, said Thursday by telephone that he was shown the Joseph Smith letter in 1984 by manuscript collector Mark Hofman of Salt Lake City, who bought it from a stamp collector. "I've seen hundreds of letters signed by 'Joseph Smith,' a very common name, but the second I saw this one I recognized it as the Mormon prophet's signature," Hamilton said. "I said it was probably of great historical interest and was worth about \$15,000. Hofman told me he sold it within three weeks to the church for \$25,000."

Much or all of the material that was brokered by Hofman has been discredited by many Mormons simply because of his subsequent conviction for the bombing attack. The fact that some of the letters and documents have proved to be forgeries does not explain those that continue to be accepted as authentic by the Church.

A typewritten copy of the Smith letter had been circulating anonymously among Mormon historians since last spring but its existence was unconfirmed and its owner apparently unknown. After a previous denial that the church owned it, Jerry Cahill, the church's spokesman, said he was called into the office of Gordon Hinckley, second counselor to Mormon President Spencer Kimball, on May 3 and told that the First Presidency had the letter in its vault and that it might eventually be available for study. As it became clear during this week that photocopies of the letter would soon be circulated by sources outside the official church, Cahill announced that the church would discuss the contents and release a photographic copy of the letter.

While the Mormon Church leadership in one sense may have been prodded to acknowledge and talk about the new finds, it was aided in taking that course by scholars who have argued that the Smith and Harris letters will not inflict

¹⁰⁶ JHS, 1:56

great harm to the church. Ronald W. Walker of BYU's Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and Richard P. Howard, church historian for the Reorganized LDS Church based in Independence, Mo., both recently took that approach.

Walker said many Americans in the Northeast during the early 19th Century believed that previous civilizations, pirates or Spaniards had left buried treasure that could be found by certain magical methods. Vermont, where Joseph Smith's family first lived, had many digging sites, he said. Dreams and "peep stones" contributed to locating lost treasure, and it was widely understood that trickster spirits would be guarding these rich caches. "We're not talking about black magic or dark occult powers," Walker said. "Angels were as real to Martin Harris as were conjured spirits."

Howard claimed that prayer and magic were "consistent companions" throughout the world. Churchgoers should try to bridge the gap to Joseph Smith's time and walk with (the early Mormons) in empathy and imagination," he said. On the other hand, Peggy Fletcher, publisher-editor of the independent Mormon-oriented magazine *Sunstone*, questioned the approach by Walker and Howard: "Why does it not make me feel better to hear that everybody was into magic then? I think historians are naive if they think members are going to buy this."

The letter which caused so much consternation but which has been authenticated by Church experts follows. Written in Joseph's hand, it suggests that a clever spirit was guarding buried treasure and offers some occult methods for detecting the spirit.

Canandagua June 18th 1825

Dear Sir

My Father has Shown me your letter informing him and me of your Success in locating the mine as you Suppose but we are of the oppinion that Since you cannot asertain any particulars you Should not dig more untill you first discover if any valluables remain you know the treasure must be guarded by Some clever spirit and if such is discovered so is the treasure so do this take a hasel Stick one yard long being new Cut and cleave it Just in the middle and lay it asunder on the mine so that both inner parts of the stick may look one right against the other one inch distant and if there is treasure after a while you shall see them draw and Join together again of themselves let me know how it is Since you were here I have almost decided to accept your offer and if you can make it convenient to come this way I shall be ready to accompany you if nothing happens more than I know of I am very respectfully

Joseph Smith Jr -----

The History of the Church, much of it written by the "Prophet" himself, is just a notch below the "scripture" which it supports. George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff, when they were Church historians, said in referring to the History of Joseph Smith that "a history more correct in its details than this was never published."¹⁰⁷ The History goes on to say that it "has been CAREFULLY REVISED under the strict inspection of President Brigham Young, and APPROVED BY HIM"¹⁰⁸ (editor's emphasis).

It is difficult to imagine a perfect work requiring revisions but then the *Book of Mormon* has had over 4,000 revisions with no end in sight. It is remarkable then that Joseph could refer to the perfection of *Book of Mormon* when he said:

I told the Brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth ... and a man could get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book ... (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 194)

JOSEPH SMITH, "TRANSLATOR OF ANCIENT RECORD"

With growing acceptance of the "Golden Bible," Joseph was flush with success. His closest followers felt that they were in the presence of a man that spoke often with God and could accomplish any feat. Another test came in 1843 with the discovery of more ancient "plates." Could the "seer" translate these latest plates with the ease that he had the gold plates, sixteen years earlier?

¹⁰⁷ *History of the Church*, preface pg. V

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pg. VI

1843: A FRESH TRANSLATION CHALLENGE

A remarkable discovery was made in 1843, in Pike county, Illinois, which resulted in reverberations that would be felt more than a hundred years later. The find was of the “Kinderhook Plates” which were fraudulently made and placed in a burial mound to “fool” the Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, who, unaware of their origin, began to “translate” them. As he wrote in his diary under the date of May 1, 1843: “I insert fac-similes of the six brass plates found near Kinderhook, in Pike county, Illinois, on April 23, by Mr. Robert Wiley and others, while excavating a large mound.... I HAVE TRANSLATED A PORTION OF THEM, and find they contain the history of the person with whom they were found. HE WAS A DESCENDANT OF HAM, THROUGH THE LOINS OF PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT, and that he received his kingdom from the Ruler of heaven and earth.”¹⁰⁹ The Mormon Prophet was so impressed with these “plates” that he included the “fac-similes” in the “official” history of the Church.

1879: THE TRICKSTERS CONFESS

One of the perpetrators of the fraud, a Mr. Wilbur Fugate, signed a sworn affidavit on June 30, 1879 explaining not only WHO was involved in the plan to trick the Mormon Prophet, but HOW they made the plates, i.e. *Bridge Whitton cut them out of some pieces of copper, Wiley and I made the hieroglyphics by making impressions on beeswax and filling them with acid and putting it on the plates. When they were finished we put them together with rust made of nitric acid, old iron and lead, and bound them with a piece of hoop iron, covering them completely with the rust.*¹¹⁰ Not too surprising, the Mormon Leaders disregarded the affidavit because of the implications. Besides, the plates were believed “lost” since they had been gone since the Civil War and were thought to have been destroyed with the museum which housed them. So far, so good!

1960: OH, OH, A PLATE “REAPPEARS”

What do we do now? A couple of fellows walk into the Chicago Historical Society and ask to see a bell-shaped brass plate known as a Kinderhook Plate. These fellows, non-LDS, proclaim that “the plate was engraved with a pointed instrument and not etched with acid.” So! They must be authentic!

1962: THE “PROPHET” WAS RIGHT!

Based on the “report” that the plate was “engraved” rather than “etched” the official Mormon Church monthly magazine proclaims “A recent rediscovery of one of the Kinderhook plates which was examined by Joseph Smith, Jun., REAFFIRMS HIS PROPHETIC CALLING and reveals the false statements made by one of the finders.”¹¹¹ The Mormon Church then proclaimed that this “rediscovery” then “put the plates back into the category of ‘genuine’ WHICH JOSEPH SMITH, JUN., HAD SAID THEY WERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.” The Church then states that their “Prophet” had “pronounced them genuine and translated a part of them.” The Church observes that the “Prophet” had also recorded these facts in his diary.¹¹²

1964: SO WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

“THE PLATES ARE NOW BACK IN THEIR ORIGINAL CATEGORY OF GENUINE. What scholars may learn FROM THIS ANCIENT RECORD IN FUTURE YEARS or what may be translated by divine power is an exciting thought to contemplate. This much remains. JOSEPH SMITH, JUN. STANDS AS A TRUE PROPHET AND TRANSLATOR OF ANCIENT RECORDS by divine means AND ALL THE WORLD IS INVITED TO INVESTIGATE THE TRUTH which has sprung out of the earth NOT ONLY OF THE KINDERHOOK PLATES, but of the *Book of Mormon* as well.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ D.H.C., History of Joseph Smith the Prophet. By Himself. Vol. 5 p. 372

¹¹⁰ The entire affidavit appears in *The Improvement Era*, Vol. 65 No. 9, Sept., 1962, pp. 656, 658

¹¹¹ *Improvement Era*, *ibid.*, p. 637

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 656

¹¹³ *ibid.* p. 660

1981: OOPS!

Additional testing PROVES the KINDERHOOK PLATES TO BE A FRAUD. In an interesting nine page article titled “Kinderhook Plates Brought to Joseph Smith Appear to Be a Nineteenth-Century Hoax” the official Mormon magazine “Ensign” states “The conclusion, therefore, is that this Chicago plate is indeed one of the original Kinderhook plates, which now fairly well evidences them to be faked antiques.”¹¹⁴

IF NOT PLATES, THEN HOW ABOUT PAPYRI

No discussion of LDS scripture would be complete without touching upon the Pearl of Great Price, and in particular, The Book of Abraham. The Book of Abraham was translated by Joseph Smith from some papyrus fragments that he had purchased from a man claiming to be an Egyptologist traveling through the area with several mummies on display.

THE MUMMIES

To summarize, the “prophet Joseph Smith” came into the possession of some Egyptian mummies including two rolls of papyrus in July of 1835. In his own words: “Soon after this, some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, ... I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.”¹¹⁵ Joseph “translated” what is now *The Book of Abraham* from the papyrus. (No one could understand Egyptian hieroglyphics until years later).

PAPYRI FOUND

It was long thought that the mummies and papyri were lost in the Chicago fire, but it turns out the papyri had been in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which presented them to the Mormon Church in November 1967. The papyri are rather common funerary text from the Egyptian “Book of Breathings” and have since been translated and bear absolutely no resemblance to Joseph’s Book of Abraham.¹¹⁶ By matching portions of these recently RE-discovered papyri with Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar, it can be conclusively illustrated that Joseph’s “translation” is a hoax. He had actually “translated” 76 words from ONE simple character that resembled an inverted “E.”¹¹⁷

Incidentally, the *Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar* was suppressed by the Mormon Church’s Leaders for over 125 years, and would still be “unavailable” had it not been for someone who smuggled it, and for their own reasons, made it available for publication in 1966. Conclusive proof of this particular “translation” fraud and its many implications can now be disclosed.¹¹⁸ While some have come to accept the conclusion of fraud, the intriguing story of how the Mormon leaders have handled this problem is just as interesting.¹¹⁹

Using several of the facsimiles from the papyri, Joseph Smith demonstrated that these were representations of Abraham in Egypt and proceeded to then “translate” the papyri fragments into their English meanings. This was done prior to the general understanding of the Rosetta Stone decoding of the ancient Egyptian language. In a recent comparison of the papyri to Joseph’s notes, it was apparent that the 13th and 14th verses of *Abraham 1* were translated from one single character resembling a backward *E*. Yet, in fact, Joseph Smith translated this into 76 words, with 9 proper names, and 8 other nouns. The character for the Egyptian god, Khonso, was translated by Joseph Smith into 177 words in *Abraham 1*:16-19.

Dealing with this issue has been a major test of faith for Mormon scholars. Three Major non-LDS Egyptologists, Klaus Baer, Richard A. Parker, and the late John A. Wilson, reviewed the fragments and all concluded that Joseph’s translation was totally incorrect and his restorations of the facsimiles were a gross injustice to the art of Egyptology.

¹¹⁴ *Ensign*, Vol. 11, No. 8 August 1981, p. 70

¹¹⁵ D.H.C., Vol. 2, p. 236

¹¹⁶ See the five articles in *Dialogue: A Journal Mormon Thought*, Vol. III, No. 2, Summer 1968

¹¹⁷ *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, p. 322

¹¹⁸ *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found*, 1975, Utah Lighthouse Ministry

¹¹⁹ Tanner & Tanner, Fall of the Book of Abraham, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, Ch. 22, pg. 294

Parker describes Facsimile number 1 as a “well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries, with Anubis, the jackal-headed god on the left, ministering to the dead Osiris on the bier. The pencilled (?) restoration (by Smith) is incorrect. Anubis should be jackal-headed. The left arm of Osiris is in reality lying at his side under him. The apparent upper hand is part of a second bird which is hovering over the erect phallus of Osiris (now broken away). The second bird is Isis and she is magically impregnated by the dead Osiris and then later gives birth to Horus who avenges his father and takes over his inheritance.”¹²⁰

Klaus Baer basically repeats the same description, in his translation of the papyri as the “Breathing Permit of Hor.” He states, “The vignette of P. JS I is unusual, but parallels exist on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples of Egypt, the closest being the scenes in the Osiris chapels on the roof of the Temple of Dendera.” He specifically describes Facsimile 1, “There are some problems about restoring the missing parts of the body of Osiris. He was almost certainly represented as ithyphallic, ready to beget Horus, as in many of the scenes at Dendera.”¹²¹ In all, all three Egyptologists confirm that the Joseph Smith papyri deal exclusively with pagan rituals, pagan gods, and the Breathing Peak of Hor.

One of the most revealing and honest “in-house” appraisals of this document was published recently by Dr. Edward H. Ashment, an LDS Egyptologist working with the translation department of the LDS Church.¹²²

Throughout Ashment’s Appraisal of the Facsimiles, he deals with pagan rituals and pagan gods. At no time does he make a connection to Abraham, Abraham’s God or Abraham’s religion—just paganism. While Ashment went far out of his way in softening any blows against the prophet Joseph, no one can read his work and not see the totally illiterate definitions given the pagan works by Joseph Smith.¹²³

As one Mormon writer said: “To a professional historian, for example, the recent translation of the Joseph Smith papyri may well represent the potentially most damaging case against Mormonism since its foundation. Yet the ‘Powers That Be’ at the Church Historian’s office should take comfort in the fact that the almost total lack of response to this translation is an uncanny proof of Frank Kermode’s observation that even the most devastating acts of disconfirmation will have no effect whatever on true believers.”¹²⁴ Translation? Joseph Smith papyri? What’s going on here? Simply this. Book of Abraham is part of the Mormon Church’s canonized scripture called the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Book of Abraham states at the heading above that book’s chapter one that it is: “Translated from the papyrus, by Joseph Smith” and that it came “from the catacombs of Egypt...The writings of Abraham... written by his own hand, upon papyrus.”

The Mormon scriptures appear to be akin to a pickup truck filled with tangled fishing line. We are still standing in that pickup truck, up to our waists, almost incomprehensibly looking all about us at the unbelievable mess. Where do we go from here? We have hardly begun to clear up the twisted ends. Our God is not the author of such confusion. You should have progressed far enough through this volume to the point where you may never doubt what Proverbs 30:6 means when it says, *Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*. What you have seen here is an endless series of lies built upon lies, so compounded that it is an impossible task to work your way back to truth.

BY 1843 GOD HAS BECOME FLESH AND BONE

Why were the *Lectures* removed from the *Doctrines and Covenants* published in 1921? Ask the missionaries. Most likely because they raised more questions than they answered. They were reflective of Joseph’s doctrine in 1835. By 1843 Joseph provided some items of instruction which were to become section 130 of the *Doctrines and Covenants* which states:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit (verse 22)

¹²⁰ Vincent H. Malmstrom, “Where Time Began,” *Science Digest*, December 1981, pages 56-59, 112-113.

¹²¹ Richard A. Parker, *The Joseph Smith Papyri. A Preliminary Report*, *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, page 86.

¹²² Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hor,” *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, pages 109-110, 119.

¹²³ Dr. Edward H. Ashment, “The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham,” *Sunstone*, Volume 4, Numbers 5 and 6, pages 33-48.

¹²⁴ Klaus Hansen, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1970, p. 110

Where was Joseph's evolution of God leading? Just three months before his murder he integrated his developed theology in one significant sermon. As Mormon writer, Van Hale, wrote in his 17 page article entitled *The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse*¹²⁵ that:

Joseph took the stand at 3:15 pm Sunday, April 7, 1844 and delivered the most controversial sermon of his life, unparalleled in Mormonism in historical and doctrinal significance. (p. 211)

What did Joseph say? You can read a compilation of three scribes of the full sermon which has been published in the same issue of *BYU Studies* that Mr. Hale's article comes from.¹²⁶ Limited space prohibits inclusion here. However, Mr. Hale summarizes the four primary concepts from the King Follett discourse as follows¹²⁷:

1. Men can become gods,
2. There exists many gods,
3. The gods exist one above the other innumerably, and...
4. God was once as man now is.

So Joseph's god is now a resurrected man with a body of flesh and bones in direct conflict with his earlier teachings in the Lectures on Faith which taught that God is a Spirit. Writer Van Hale must have done exhaustive research for his article (aside from his some seventy-three footnotes). He is to be congratulated. His research includes the views of the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt who was a contemporary of Joseph's and a most prolific Mormon Writer. Incidentally, Pratt, in an article in *Dialogue*¹²⁸, is called "Father of Mormon Pamphleteering" by Brigham Young University professor, Peter Crawley, who lists some thirty-one written works by Parley P. Pratt and states that he "all but single-handedly, invented Mormon bookwriting." Insightful, is one of these writings:

*Whoever reads our books, or hears us preach, knows that we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as one God. That the Son has flesh and bones, and the Father is a spirit. But we would inform Mr. H. that a personage of Spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, and that it is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones; hence it is said that Jesus is the express image of his (the Father's) person.*¹²⁹

Mormon writer Hale adds this obvious, but very important thought:

*This represents at least Pratt's understanding of Mormon doctrine on the Godhead in 1840.*¹³⁰

DOCTRINE FORMATION CAN BE CONFUSING

What's the bottom line? What can we conclude when the actual history of the Mormon concept of God is studied over time? Mr. Hale, following extensive research into the subject states that:

Prior to 1841, church doctrine described the father as 'being a personage of spirit, while the Son was a 'personage of tabernacle, made or fashioned like unto a man.' This was well established doctrine, having been taught to the elders at the School of the Prophets in 1834, published in the Church paper in Kirtland in 1835, approved by the general assembly of the Church at Kirtland in 1835 to be part of the 'doctrine' section of the Doctrine and Covenants, and taught by the elders until at least 1840. However, by April 2, 1843 the new doctrine taught, of Jesus, that 'all things that he had seen the Father do, he had done, and that he had done nothing but what he saw the Father do.' Thus the Father is a resurrected being of flesh and bones like the Son. The old doctrine gave way to the new, upon Joseph's frequent teachings on the subject, and its harmony with the concepts of eternal progression which were becoming more common at Nauvoo.¹³¹

¹²⁵ *BYU Studies*, Winter 1978, Vol. 18, no. 2

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 213

¹²⁸ Vol. 15, No. 3 Autumn 1982

¹²⁹ Parley P. Pratt, "[An Answer to Mr. William Hewett's Tract](#)" published in 1840, page 9.

¹³⁰ *BYU Studies*, Winter 1978, pg. 219

¹³¹ *ibid.*, pages 219 and 220

SUMMARY OF THE CONFUSION

JESUS TAUGHT: *And This Is Life Eternal, That They Might Know Thee The Only True God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou Has Sent.* John 17:3

BRIGHAM: *But There Never Was A Time When There Were Not Gods...*¹³²

¹³² *Journal of Discourses*, 7:333

**God's Father
(A God)**

I learned it by translating the papyrus which is now in my house.... If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also....D.H.C. Vol. 6, pp. 474, 476 (Sermon given by the prophet Joseph Smith)

**Adam's Father
(A God)**

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and Sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize Adam this world. He is Michael the Archangel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken-HE IS OUR FATHER AND OUR GOD, AND THE ONLY GOD WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing must hear it, and will know it sooner or later [Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, pp. 50, 51 (Brigham Young sermon given April 9, 1852)]

**Jesus Christ
(A God)**

Christ is the God of Israel. [Mormon Doctrine, 1979 ed. by Bruce McConkie, p. 323]

**Holy Ghost
(A God)**

...the Holy Ghost is a man; he is one Holy Ghost of the sons of our father and our God; and he is that man that stood next to Jesus Christ, just as I stand by brother Brigham. [Journal of Discourses, Vol. 5, p. 179 (Comments by Heber C. Kimball given August 23, 1857)]

**Abraham
(A God?)**

Abraham ... ; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded;... and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods. [Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132:37 (from the "Revelation" regarding Polygamy recorded July 12, 1843)]

**Joseph Smith
(A God?)**

No man or woman of this dispensation will enter the Celestial Kingdom without the consent of Joseph Smith. [Journal of Discourses, 7:289]

**Brigham Young
(A God?)**

The only men who become Gods, even the Brigham Young Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. [Journal of Discourses, 11:269 (Brigham Young, August 19, 1866)]

**YOU
(if male)
(A God?)**

Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose 225,000 of you may become gods. [The Ensign, November 1975, p. 80 (speech given by Spencer W. Kimball)]

CHAPTER 2

THE *Book of Mormon* AND ITS MANY SOURCES

The basis and foundation of the Mormon Church is comprised of *The Book of Mormon*, Mormon scripture, the *Holy Bible* and the oracles of the “living prophet.” Unfortunately, these pedestals of the Church are without harmony. The *Book of Mormon*, the prophecies of Joseph Smith and other Mormon scripture are constantly at odds. While most honest Mormons will inquire into the truth, others tend to accept the “latest” revelation as the one requiring adherence. These conflicting issues will be dealt with in later chapters.

The *Book of Mormon* has been the subject of many books, by the Church and by non-Church scholars. Both sources reveal inconsistencies and impossibilities. The subject of the geography of the *Book of Mormon* has, by itself, been a subject of lively discussion.

The *Book of Mormon* is still the baited hook by which Mormons lure thousands of new converts into their ranks every year. Prospective converts are urged to read it and then pray to ask God if it is true. Only upon reading it do they learn of its threats of eternal condemnation to all who reject it.^{133 134}

Obviously, accepting it would seem safer than rejecting it under those circumstances, and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons for its success.

The honest scholar must investigate the origin of the *Book of Mormon* from several different aspects. This chapter will examine each of the possibilities, one of which must explain the origin of the book.

- 1) The *Book of Mormon* was translated by Joseph Smith from golden plates supplied by the Angel Moroni (or spirit or salamander).
- 2) The *Book of Mormon* was a contrivance of Joseph Smith, a product of his imagination.
- 3) The *Book of Mormon* was the plagiarized product of a written work by another author.
- 4) A combination of 2) and 3).

One of the above origins MUST be true. If a faithful believer believes that Joseph Smith did translate the plates through the “seer stones” (or silver spectacles, or Urim and Thummim) then the existence of other authored works which made their appearance prior to the revelation of the plates must be taken into consideration.

When examining the *Book of Mormon*, one must look beyond the measure of faith that the book requires. Faith in the face of impossible facts is an insult to the Author of faith, God Almighty.

SOME BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON

The text was inscribed in Egyptian, a cursed language for the Jewish people, on thin gold plates, yet had engravings on both sides, curiously difficult to either do or read. Gold weighs 1204.7 pounds per cubic foot. The plates were 7” x 8” x 6”, and had to have weighed over 200 pounds. Yet Joseph Smith carried them around under his arm, and at one time ran several miles with them. There has never been another gold plate like these found anywhere in the Americas! Or in the entire world!

The *Book of Mormon* claims to be superior to the Bible. The first hundred pages are spent laying the groundwork for this position. Its basic presupposition is that the Bible has been altered by unscrupulous clergy in centuries past and no longer contains all the truth which God wants man to have. This, then, creates a need for the *Book of*

¹³³ *Book of Mormon*, II Nephi 33:10-15; Mormon 8:16-17

¹³⁴ E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 1834; photomechanical reprint, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, n.d., pg. 89

Mormon, which claims to restore those “plain and precious things” which are necessary for the salvation of mankind.^{135 136}

It claims to be a record written on golden plates by prophets of a white race who lived in the Americas for about 1,000 years. This race was exterminated in AD 421. The indigenous race inhabiting the Americas when Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492 is portrayed by the *Book of Mormon* to be the cousins of that white race, cursed with a dark skin for having rejected God¹³⁷.

It teaches that the American Indians are actually Israelites of the tribes of Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh.¹³⁸ Their skin curse is to be removed within a few generations after being converted to Jesus Christ through the *Book of Mormon* (II Nephi 30:6-versions before 1981)¹³⁹. This change in skin color from black to white has supposedly taken place several times in the past, whenever they turned to the Lord.¹⁴⁰

Perhaps its greatest claim is that it is preparing the way for the second coming of Jesus. Christ’s second coming is to be preceded by a massive conversion of the American Indians to Christ through the *Book of Mormon*. These converted Indians will then exterminate those gentiles in the Americas who will not accept it¹⁴¹. After that, the believing Indians and the Mormons will build the New Jerusalem where Christ will return to live¹⁴². Subsequent revelation by Joseph Smith revealed this site to be in Independence, Missouri¹⁴³. Faith in the *Book of Mormon* thus becomes an added condition for salvation besides faith in Jesus Christ.

In reality, the *Book of Mormon* contains very little original information. Rather, Joseph Smith apparently reworked information which he had assimilated and then presented it as a “translation” from the golden plates. This can be demonstrated by comparing the *Book of Mormon* with other sources which were available to him. These will be discussed in detail.

Material in the *Book of Mormon* will be examined which appears to be plagiarized from The Maccabees, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Josephus’ *Wars of the Jews*, Solomon Spalding’s *Manuscript Found*, Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews* and the King James Version of the Bible. Then other kinds of difficulties with the *Book of Mormon* will be scrutinized.

The most common masculine name in the *Book of Mormon* and the title of four of its fifteen books is “Nephi.” Most Mormons are surprised to learn that this name is found in II Maccabees 1:36. Here it is a place name, however, and not the name of a person¹⁴⁴.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE SOURCE NUMBER 1

The play *Hamlet* has been popular ever since written by William Shakespeare. In the *Book of Mormon*, a paraphrase from Shakespeare is considered by many to be evidence of plagiarism¹⁴⁵. Here the *Book of Mormon* represents Lehi, who supposedly lived about 600 B.C., as saying, “the cold and silent grave from whence no traveler can return.”¹⁴⁶ The Shakespearian play, *Hamlet*, written during the 16th century after Christ, reads “..... death, the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.”¹⁴⁷ The similarity in the two passages is undeniable to the objective mind.

¹³⁵ *B of M*, I Nephi 13:26-40

¹³⁶ M. T. Lamb, *The Golden Bible or “The Book Of Mormon.” Is It From God?*, 1887; photomech. reprint, Salt Lake: Utah Lighthouse Ministry pg. 1-4.

¹³⁷ *B of M*, II Nephi 5:21

¹³⁸ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 1979, pg. 33

¹³⁹ McConkie, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁰ *B of M*, Alma 23:18

¹⁴¹ Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, , 1834, page 145-46

¹⁴² *B of M*, III Nephi 16:11-16; III Nephi 21:24-25.

¹⁴³ Howe, *ibid*.

¹⁴⁴ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow Or Reality?*, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1982, pg. 72.

¹⁴⁵ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 236-237.

¹⁴⁶ *B of M*, II Nephi 1:14

¹⁴⁷ William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, London: William Collins & Sons, 1899, pg. 1145; (Act 3, Scene 1).

Then there is the strange event in the *Book of Mormon* where Nephi is ordered by the “Spirit” to kill his uncle. This is uncannily similar to the scene in *Hamlet* where Hamlet father’s ghost appears to him and orders him to kill his uncle.¹⁴⁸ The primary difference between the two is that the “ghost” that appeared to Hamlet with these orders becomes the “Spirit” in the *Book of Mormon*; in fact, none other than the “Holy Spirit.”¹⁴⁹

Interestingly enough, righteous Nephi is much more easily convinced that this is actually the will of God than is Hamlet. Not only does Nephi show no remorse after killing his drunken uncle, but he apparently cuts off his head without getting any blood on his uncle’s clothes, for he is able to undress him, put his uncle’s clothes on himself, and then impersonate him. Since the normal-sized person has about five quarts of blood in his body, this is a miracle in itself.

Nephi then proceeds to deceive his uncle’s servant, steal the sacred brass plates, kidnap the servant, and take both them and him to America. The justification for these actions is explained very simply by the “Spirit”: “Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.”¹⁵⁰

This rationale strangely echoes the prophecy of the high priest as to why Jesus should be put to death in John 11:49-50: “Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Thus the importance of Laban’s death is perversely placed on a similar plane as Jesus’, even though Nephi violates several of the ten commandments while bringing it about.¹⁵¹ This and similar types of distortion of Biblical phraseology and theology are found throughout the *Book of Mormon*.

Critics have also long wondered why the French word “adieu” appears in the *Book of Mormon*, when it was supposed to have been translated from the golden plates into English.^{152,153} This expression is quite common throughout Shakespeare’s writings.

MANUSCRIPT FOUND SOURCE NUMBER 2

In addition to William Shakespeare who may or may not have provided source material for the *Book of Mormon*, an unpublished manuscript by Solomon Spalding could very well have been used as a model by Joseph Smith. Indeed, ever since the publication of the *Book of Mormon* in 1830, it has been accused of being a plagiarism from the Spalding manuscript¹⁵⁴. For many years the Spalding manuscripts could not be located to verify this.

When one manuscript named *Manuscript Found* finally was located, both the LDS and the RLDS published it, giving the impression that there was no resemblance between it and the *Book of Mormon* and that its publication would end this speculation¹⁵⁵.

While well known by neighbors and relatives for the manuscript that he wrote about an ancient civilization, Solomon Spalding died not knowing the result of his writings.

A superficial reading makes it obvious that the *Book of Mormon* was not copied from it as such. Still, there have been mixed feelings about this matter. Walter Martin, a cult specialist, even published a book, *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?*, explaining that Spalding had written a later manuscript which was in fact, the basis for the *Book of Mormon*¹⁵⁶.

¹⁴⁸ Shakespeare, *ibid.*, pg. 1134-1135; (Act 1, Scene 5)

¹⁴⁹ *B of M*, I Nephi 4:10-12

¹⁵⁰ *B of M*, I Nephi 4:13

¹⁵¹ Ex. 20:13,15,17

¹⁵² *B of M*, Jacob 7:27

¹⁵³ M.T. Lamb, *ibid.*, 227

¹⁵⁴ Howe, *ibid.*, pg. 288

¹⁵⁵ Jerald & Sandra Tanner, *Did Spalding Write The Book Of Mormon?*, Salt Lake: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1977, pg. 16.

¹⁵⁶ Wayne L. Cowdery, Howard A. Davis and Donald R. Scales, *Who Really Wrote The Book Of Mormon?* Santa Ana, CA: Vision House, 1977.

The evidence presented by Martin has been challenged by both the Church and some of its primary critics, but the theory itself has not been laid to rest¹⁵⁷.

Recently, Vernal Holley put the controversy in another light by minutely comparing parallels between the *Book of Mormon* and the existing Spalding manuscript¹⁵⁸.

The following are his documented conclusions, with which the author concurs after a personal analysis of *Manuscript Found*¹⁵⁹.

1. The outlines of the *Book of Mormon* and the Spalding text are “essentially the same.”¹⁶⁰
2. Both records claim to have been found in “the same way.”
3. Both were “written for the same purpose.”
4. Both “tell the story of the same ancient American inhabitants.”
5. Both “have the same sea voyage.”
6. Both “have light-skinned and dark-skinned people.”
7. Both “tell of the same arts and science.”
8. Both “have a comparable Christian theology.”
9. Both “present a white God person.”
10. Both “involve use of seer stones.”
11. Both claim to “contain an abridged history of the extinct inhabitants of ancient America.”¹⁶¹
12. Both describe how the record was deposited, protected supernaturally, and how its finder made a translation of it.
13. Both state that it “will come forth ... when the Europeans (gentiles) inhabit this land...”¹⁶²
14. Both “translators” testify of the truthfulness of the work and request that the readers read it “with a pure heart”¹⁶³
15. Both have the earth revolving about the sun, something unknown until 1543 AD¹⁶⁴.
16. A theological address by an Indian chief in Spalding’s manuscript contains “the same thoughts” and they are “in the same order” as in a similar address in the *Book of Mormon* by King Benjamin¹⁶⁵.
17. Spalding’s leader teaches from a “sacred roll,” while King Benjamin teaches from “plates of brass.”
18. The religious section of Spalding is written in the chiasmic style, which is found throughout the *Book of Mormon*¹⁶⁶.
19. Lobaska’s rule over two empires and his golden age of peace parallels Christ’s effect on the peoples in the *Book of Mormon*¹⁶⁷.
20. Both include coins and fortifications¹⁶⁸.
21. Both have similar scenes of bloodshed, even down to the final combats between enemy commanders.
22. Both depict a “little band” of warriors, 3,000 in M. F. and 2,000 Nephi-Lehis in the *Book of Mormon*¹⁶⁹.

Besides these parallels, there are literally hundreds of identical or similar word combinations. In order to conserve space, only a few are listed below¹⁷⁰:

rights of their country (M.F., 31 vs. III Nephi 6:30)
crying with a loud voice (M.F., 80 vs. Alma 46:19)
He put forth his hand and (M.F., 28 vs. Alma 30:51)
An immense slaughter (M.F., 101 vs. Alma 49:21)

¹⁵⁷ Tanner, *Spalding*, *ibid.*, pg. 17.

¹⁵⁸ Vernal Holley, *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look*, Ogden: Zenos, 1983.

¹⁵⁹ Solomon Spalding, *The “Manuscript Found” Manuscript Story 1910*; reprinted as Part 2 of *Did Spalding Write The Book Of Mormon?*, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1977.

¹⁶⁰ Holley, *ibid.* pg. 10.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, pg. 11.

¹⁶² *Manuscript Found*, pg. 3-4; *B of M*, I Nephi 13:35; 3:184-185.

¹⁶³ *Manuscript Found*, pg. 2-3; *B of M*, Moroni 10:4-5; Holley, *ibid.*, pg. 12.

¹⁶⁴ *Manuscript Found*, pg. 16; *B of M*, Helaman 12:13-15; Holley, *ibid.*, pg. 14.

¹⁶⁵ *Manuscript Found*, pg. 26-32; *B of M*, Mosiah 1-4.

¹⁶⁶ Holley, *ibid.*, pg. 16.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 17.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pg. 18.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 20-24.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 28-30.

Mourning and lamentation (M.F., 84 vs. Helaman 7:15)
according to their numbers (M.F., 54 vs. III Nephi 6:3)

Even more surprising than these parallels, however, is the land area described in the two books. Holley emphasizes that *Book of Mormon* geography quite neatly matches the land described in *Manuscript Found*. Thus the “sea east” becomes Lake Ontario and the “sea west” becomes Lake Erie rather than, as Mormons have assumed, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Locating the River Sidon has always been a difficulty for *Book of Mormon* scholars¹⁷¹. With this model, however, the River Sidon handily becomes the present-day Genesee River.¹⁷²

Another problem has been the width of the “small neck of land” in the *Book of Mormon*, which is described as “a day and a half’s journey” from sea to sea (Alma 22:32). The distance of thirty-seven miles between these two lakes fits the description much better than the distance of over one hundred thirty miles at the Isthmus of Panama. Sixty-seven ancient fortified earthworks have been found at this location (Holley, pg. 34). Spalding lived in this area and had firsthand knowledge of the earthworks, names and geographical locations that are portrayed in his writings. By imposing the *Book of Mormon* descriptions on maps of these areas, the following modern place names are found to coincide with the cities and lands in the *Book of Mormon*¹⁷³.

Place names in present-day New York and those given in the *Book Of Mormon* compare quite favorably: Angola/Angola; Boaz/Boaz; Jerusalem/Jerusalem; Jordan/Jordan; Lehigh/Lehi, Rama/Ramah, St. Agathe/Ogath, Alma/Valley of Alma, Antrim/Antum, Antioch/Anti-Anti, Conner/Comner, St. Ephrem/Hill Ephraim, Hellam/Helam, Jacobsburg/Jacobugath, Kishkiminetas, Kishkumen, Mantua/Manti, Monroe/Moroni, Minoa/Minon, Moraviantown/Morianton, Morin/Moron, Noah Lake/Land of Noah, Oneida/Onidah, Oneida/Castle Hill/Onidah, Omer/Omner, Ripple Lake/Waters of Ripliancum, Sodom/Sidom, Shiloh/Shilom, Shurbrook/Shurr, Tenecum/Teancum.

Holley bolsters his case for Spalding authorship of the *Book of Mormon* with a quotation by Mormon archaeologist Joseph Vincent, who said:

*If a sincere student of the Book of Mormon will conscientiously read and study the book itself and will plot out all the locations mentioned he will find that all Book of Mormon lands lie within a five or six hundred mile radius, and that this area could not possibly extend from Chile to New York.*¹⁷⁴

In an unpublished article, Holley also compares Josephus’ Wars of the Jews and the *Book of Mormon* showing remarkable parallels. While it is not likely that Joseph Smith, Jr. would have studied Josephus, Solomon Spalding was a seminary graduate, and it is very likely that he would have known about Josephus’ writings¹⁷⁵.

One parallel is of particular interest. This is where a man named Jesus says things which are very similar to what Jesus Christ said in the *Book of Mormon* upon coming to America after his resurrection:

*A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people! Woe, woe to Jerusalem!*¹⁷⁶

The parallel passage in the *Book of Mormon* reads:

*And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon an the face of this land, crying: Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they repent!*¹⁷⁷

MANUSCRIPT FOUND-FROM THE MOUTH OF WITNESSES

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, pg. 28-30.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, pg. 35.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, pg. 39-42.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pg. 33.

¹⁷⁵ Vernal Holley, *A Study of the Similarities Between the Works of Flavius Josephus and the Book of Mormon: 1981*” Photocopy, 3800 S. 1900 W. 188, Roy, Utah 84067, pg. 41.

¹⁷⁶ Book 6, Ch. 5, v. 1-3.

¹⁷⁷ *B of M*, III Nephi 9:1-2.

The intrigue concerning its authorship and subsequent disappearance are detailed here. Below is the story, told in its entirety, which comes from *Spalding Memorial*, a genealogical (dear to the hearts of the Mormons) record of the Spalding family. It was compiled by Charles W. Spalding and was published in 1897¹⁷⁸.

From the *Spalding Memorial* the verbatim text of the introductory book plate reads:

THE Book of Mormon OR "GOLDEN BIBLE of Joseph Smith, upon which the superstructure of MORMONISM was erected about 1830, was originally the literary production of Reverend Solomon Spalding, who wrote it as a work of fiction about 1812, and called it "MANUSCRIPT FOUND." He never published it, however, and the original manuscript afterwards fell into the hands of Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith, who knew of its production, and later appeared with some alterations as the MORMON BIBLE. The above statement is well authenticated, and fully narrated in the present edition of SPALDING MEMORIAL, pages 236 to 243, rendering it a valuable work of reference for public or private libraries.

Spaulding Memorial includes his short biography within the pages of the genealogy:

2855. SOLOMON-6 (Josiah⁵, Ephraim⁴, Edward³, Benjamin², Edward¹), b. Feb. 20, 1761, at Ashford, Conn.; d. Sept. 10, 1816, aged 55, in Pittsburg, Pa.; other authority says Amity, Washington Co., Pa.

A more complete picture of his life can be found in the book and elsewhere¹⁷⁹:

Solomon Spalding served in the Revolutionary war as a private in Capt. John William's Co., Col. Obadiah Johnson's Regt.; entered service Jan. 8, 1778. He read law with Judge Zephaniah Swift, of Windham, Conn., but on change of religious views, sought the ministry, and entered the sophomore class at Dartmouth College at the age of twenty-one. Graduating there in 1785, he studied divinity, and became a licentiate of the Windham, Conn., Cong. Association, Oct. 9, 1787; preached eight or ten years, and, being in this time ordained an evangelist, received several offers to settle, that were declined, owing to ill health. In 1795. He was married, and soon after went into business with his brother Josiah, at Cherry Valley, N.Y., but both removed the store to Richfield, N.Y., in 1799. Here they purchased large tracts of land in Pennsylvania and Ohio, to superintend which Solomon moved to Salem, Ohio, but the war of 1812 deranged their plans and caused great losses. Josiah, then visiting his brother, found him in poor health and low spirits, writing a work of fiction, suggested by the opening of a mound, in which was discovered human bones and some relics indicative of a former civilized race. He entitled his work a "Manuscript Found," and in it imagined the fortunes of the extinct people. Josiah left him thus employed. Not long after, probably in 1814, Solomon went to Pittsburg, Pa., where he was followed by Sidney Rigdon, then a printer and afterwards a noted Mormon. He told his employer of Spalding's novel, who borrowed the manuscript, and offered to print it. This was refused, and the author wandered to Amity, the place of his death. His widow returned to New York with the manuscript, and while absent from home, a stranger called on her and desired to examine it, that he might confirm or refute a report current in the West, that it had become the Mormon bible. She permitted him to visit her house and obtain it from a certain chest. He went and reported that he could not find it. Mrs. Spalding never saw it after this. The probability is, that Rigdon copied the work at Pittsburg, and that the stranger purloined the original to avoid a future exposure. The uniform testimony of those who read the work is, that the basis, and in great part, the form thereof, now constitute the Mormon bible. And thus a clergyman was most unwittingly and innocently the medium of a delusion, whose dimensions have become so large, and its impostures so monstrous."

The above facts are embodied in a letter from his brother, given below:

EASTFORD, Jan. 6, 1855. REV. SIR: I received your letter of the 21st of December requesting me to give you a sketch of my brother Solomon's life. I should be pleased to oblige you satisfactorily, but my recollection and faculty of mind is so much impaired with age and infirmity, being within two months of ninety years of age, I can give but a broken narrative. He was born 1761. In the first part of the Revolutionary war he was in the army or at work on the farm. I do not recollect when he commenced study for education at High School, nor how long he continued there; but when he left there he went to study with the celebrated Zephaniah Swift to prepare for the practice of law. How long he studied with him I do not

¹⁷⁸ pp. 236-243.

¹⁷⁹ *Dartmouth Alumni*, p. 32]

recollect; but before he got through, his mind changed from law to gospel, and he left and went to college; but when I do not recollect. I believe he was in college about three years. He did not study theology at any public school after he left. When he left college he was out of health, and was so for years. He was approbated to preach as a Congregationalist, and followed that calling a number of years, but never settled, on account of his health, though often urged. In 1795 he married. I went to Cherry Valley and commenced merchandising. I had no wife. He followed soon after with his wife and joined me in partnership. He left the store to my care. He took the charge of an academy and preached occasionally for a while. We continued in Cherry Valley about four years, and then we moved our store sixteen miles, to Richfield. We soon after went into a large speculation in new land in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and after a few years he moved out there with his wife; she never had any children. He sold a large amount of land on credit, principally to people in Ohio. The war that broke out with England seriously affected that country. That circumstance, with some other misfortunes that happened, placed us in difficult circumstances. We were under the necessity to make great sacrifices to pay our debts. I went to see my brother and staid with him some time. I found him unwell, and somewhat low in spirits. He began to compose his novel, which it is conjectured that the Mormons made use of in forming their bible. Indeed, although there was nothing in it of Mormonism or that favored error in any way, yet I am apprehensive that they took pattern from it in forming their delusion. You may find my reason in what follows. In the town where he lived, which I expect is now called Salem, Ohio, there is the appearance of an ancient fort, and near by a large mound, which, when opened, was found to contain human bones. These things gave it the appearance of its being inhabited by a civilized people. These appearances furnished a topic of conversation among the people. My brother told me that a young man told him that he had a wonderful dream. He dreamed that he himself (if I recollect right) opened a great mound, where there were human bones. There he found a written history that would answer the inquiry respecting the civilized people that once inhabited that country until they were destroyed by the savages. This story suggested the idea of writing a novel merely for amusement. The title of His novel, I think, was "Historical Novel," or "Manuscript Found." This novel is the history contained in the manuscript found. The author of it he brings from the Old World, but from what nation I do not recollect; I think not a Jew; nor do I recollect how long since, but I think before the Christian Era. He was a man of superior learning suited to that day. He went to sea, lost his point of compass, and finally landed on the American shore; I think near the mouth of the Mississippi River. There he reflects most feelingly on what he suffered, his present condition and future prospects; he likewise makes some lengthy remarks on astronomy and philosophy, which I should think would agree in sentiment and style with very ancient writings. He then started and traveled a great distance through a wilderness country inhabited by savages, until he came to a country where the inhabitants were civilized, cultivated their land, and had a regular form of government, which was at war with the savages. There I left him and never saw him nor his writings any more. He soon after moved to Pittsburg, in Pennsylvania, where he lived awhile and then moved farther, to a place where he died. His widow then returned to the State of New York, and lived there awhile and then came to Connecticut. She informed me, if I recollect right, that my brother continued his history of the civilized nation and the progress of the war until the triumph of the savages to the destruction of the civilized government. Likewise she informed me that soon after they arrived at Pittsburg a man followed them, I do not recollect his name, but he was afterwards known to be a leading Mormon. He got into the employment of a printer, and he told the printer about my brother's composition. The printer called and requested the privilege of taking it home to read. He, my brother, let him take it; he kept it some time, and then he urged him, my brother, to let him print it. He, my brother, would not consent, but took it back, and she said that she brought it to New York and put it into a chest where she lived. And at a time when she was from home a stranger called upon her and requested her to let him see the novel that her husband composed. He said that he lived at the West, and it was reported there that it gave rise to Mormonism; if not true he wished to counteract the report. She told him that he might go to the house; it was in a chest, he might take it and examine it. He went to the chest, and I think she told me that he said that he could not find it, but it has never been found since. But what use could they make of it? I never saw the Mormon bible but once, and then only for a minute, no time to examine it. I have but little knowledge of Mormonism; I have been out of the way of it. You, sir, no doubt, have more knowledge; but if I have been rightly informed, there is a striking resemblance between the first start and introduction of the Mormon bible and my brother's novel. They both claimed that the manuscripts from which they pretend they copied were of very ancient date and written by men that came here from the old world. The Mormon bible was not published until after my brother's death.

Yours respectfully, JOSIAH SPALDING.

The following is a copy of a letter written forty years ago [1857], and published in the *Telegraph*:

ORIGIN OF MORMONISM. An Interesting Old Letter Written Forty Years Ago Light Shed Upon the History of the Book of Mormonism-Sidney Rigdon's Claims Confuted. [To the editor of the Telegraph.] The most

direct and important testimony which has yet been given, bearing upon this question, is the letter of the widow of Rev. Solomon Spalding, which was published in the Boston Recorder, in its issue of April 19, 1839, only nine years after the appearance of the Book of Mormon. It has been repeatedly reprinted, but there are many of the present generation who have not seen it, and who will peruse it with deep interest. Especially will this be the case in this city and vicinity, which may be regarded as the birthplace of this great impostor. The prefatory note from Rev. John Storrs, at that time (1839) pastor of the Congregational church in Holliston, Massachusetts, fully explains the occasion for writing this letter, and the appended testimonials of Rev. Messrs. Ely and Austin, of Monson, Massachusetts, emphatically sustain the reliability of Mrs. Davidson.

HOLLISTON, April 8, 1839.

To THE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON RECORDER:

Dear Sir: As the pastor of the Congregational church and Society in this town, I have had occasion to come in contact with Mormonism in its grossest form. Consequently I have been led to make inquiries relative to its origin, progress, and, so far as they have any, the peculiar sentiments of its votaries. My object in this has been, as a faithful pastor, as far as possible, to arrest the progress of what I deem to be one of the rankest delusions ever palmed on poor human nature. However, not supposing that the readers of the Recorder would be interested in the details of Mormonism in general, I send you for publication in your valuable periodical. the following communication, as a paper of unusual importance, giving a certified and sufficiently well attested and true account of the "Book of Mormon," or "Golden Bible," as it is sometimes called, on which the whole system mainly depends.

And here, perhaps, it should be said, that the leaders of the delusion pretend that the book was dug out of the ground, where it had been deposited for many centuries; that it was written on certain metallic plates in a peculiar character or hieroglyphic; that the finder, a man of money-digging memory, who was accustomed to look into the ground by aid of a peculiar stone, was in a similar manner enabled to read and translate It. Hence it is sometimes called the Mormon bible. But not such was its origin, according to the following communication. The occasion of the communication coming into my hands is as follows: Having heard incidentally that there was a lady in Monson, Massachusetts, whose husband, now dead, was the author of the book, I requested in a note, Rev. D. R. Austin, principal of Monson academy, to obtain of her, for my benefit, and to be used as I should think proper, a certified account of its origin with her husband, for the character of which lady I wished the venerable Dr. Ely and himself to vouch. The following highly satisfactory document came in reply: You are requested to insert it in the Recorder; not so much because it will interest the majority of your readers, but that the facts well attested may be laid up in memory, and the number of your paper containing them being kept, may afford the means to an enlightened community to refute so great an imposition on the world. I would not only respectfully bespeak its publication in the Recorder, but in other papers; I would it were published throughout the land. For many Mormons are straggling throughout the country, endeavoring to propagate their notions; and with some success with a peculiar class of people. The origin of this pretended revelation being thus completely authenticated, may save many minds from delusion. fanaticism and ruin.

Yours respectfully, JOHN STORRS.

ORIGIN OF THE "BOOK OF MORMON," OR "GOLDEN BIBLE."

As this book has excited much attention, and has been put by a certain new sect in place of the sacred Scriptures, I deem it a duty which I owe to the public to state what I know touching its origin. That its claims to a divine origin are wholly unfounded, needs no proof to a mind unperverted by the grossest delusions. That any sane person should rank it any higher than any other merely human composition is a matter of the greatest astonishment; yet it is received as divine by some who dwell in enlightened New England, and even by those who have sustained the character of devoted Christians. Learning recently that Mormonism has found its way into a church in Massachusetts, and has impregnated some of its members with some of its gross delusions, so that excommunication has become necessary, I am determined to delay no longer doing what I can to strip the mask from this monster of sin, and to lay open this pit of abomination. Rev. Solomon Spalding, to whom I was united in marriage in early life was a graduate of Dartmouth college, and was distinguished for a lively imagination and a great fondness for history. At the time of our marriage he resided in Cherry Valley, New York. From this place we removed to New Salem, Ashtabula county, Ohio, sometimes called Conneaut, as it is situated upon Conneaut creek. Shortly after our removal to this place, his health sunk, and he was laid aside from active labors. In the town of New Salem there are numerous mounds and forts, supposed by many to be the dilapidated dwellings and fortifications of a race

now extinct. These ancient relics arrest the attention of the new settlers. and become objects of research for the curious. Numerous implements were found, and other articles, evincing great skill in the arts. Mr. Spalding being an educated man and passionately fond of history, took a lively interest in these developments of antiquity, and in order to beguile the hours of retirement and furnish employment for his lively imagination, he conceived the idea of giving an historical sketch of this long lost race. Their extreme antiquity of course would lead him to write in the most ancient style; and as the Old Testament is the most ancient book in the world, he imitated its style as nearly as possible. His sole object in writing this historical romance was to amuse himself and his neighbors. This was about the year 1812. Hull's surrender at Detroit occurred near the same time, and I recollect the date well from that circumstance. As he progressed in his narrative, the neighbors would come in from time to time to hear portions of it read, and a great interest in the work was excited among them. It is claimed to have been written by one of the lost nation, and to have been recovered from the earth, and assumed the title of "Manuscript Found." The neighbors would often inquire how Mr. Spalding progressed in deciphering "the manuscript," and when he had a sufficient portion prepared, he would inform them, and they would assemble to hear it read. He was enabled from his acquaintance with the classics and ancient history, to introduce many singular names, which were particularly noticed by the people, and would be easily recognized by them. Mr. Solomon Spalding had a brother, Mr. John Spalding, residing in the place at the time, who was perfectly familiar with this work, and repeatedly heard the whole of it read. From New Salem we removed to Pittsburg, PA. Here we found a friend in the person of Mr. Patterson, an editor of a newspaper. He exhibited his manuscript to Mr. P., who was very much pleased with it, and borrowed it for perusal. He retained it for a long time and informed Mr. S. that if he would make out a title page and preface, he would publish it, and it would be a source of profit. This Mr. S. refused to do, for reasons which I cannot now state. Sidney Rigdon, one of the leader and founders of the sect, who had figured so largely in the history of the Mormons, was at this time connected with the printing office of Mr. Patterson, as he is well known in that region, and as Rigdon himself has frequently stated. Here he had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Mr. Spalding's manuscript, and to copy it if he chose. It was a matter of notoriety and interest to all who were connected with the printing establishment. At length the manuscript was returned to its author, and soon after we removed to Amity, Washington County. Pa., where Mr. S. deceased in 1816. The manuscript then fell into my hands, and was carefully preserved. It has frequently been examined by my daughter. Mrs. McKintsry, of Monson, Mass., with whom I now reside, and by other friends. After the "Book of Mormon" came out, a copy of it was taken to New Salem, the place of Mr. Spalding's former residence, and the very place where the "Manuscript Found" was written. A Mormon preacher appointed a meeting there, and in the meeting read end repeated copious extracts from the "Book of Mormon." The historical part was immediately recognized by the older inhabitants as the identical work of Mr. S., in which they had been so deeply interested years before. Mr. John Spalding was present, who is an eminently pious man, and recognized perfectly the work of his brother. He was amazed and afflicted that it should have been perverted to so wicked a purpose. His grief found vent in a flood of tears, and he arose on the spot and expressed in the meeting his deep sorrow and regret that the writings of his sainted brother should be used for a purpose so vile and shocking. The excitement in New Salem became so great that the inhabitants had a meeting and deputed Dr. Philaster Hurlbut, one of their number, to repair to this place and to obtain from me the original manuscript of Mr. Spalding, for the purpose of comparing it with the Mormon Bible to satisfy their own minds and to prevent their friends from embracing an error so delusive. This was in the year 1834. Dr. Hurlbut brought with him an introduction and request for the manuscript, signed by Messrs. Henry Lake, Aaron Wright and others, with all of whom I was acquainted, as they were my neighbors when I resided in New Salem. I am sure that nothing could grieve my husband more, were he living, than the use which has been made of his work. The air of antiquity which has been thrown about the composition, doubtless suggested the idea of converting it to purposes of delusion. Thus an historical romance, with the addition of a few pious expressions and extracts from the sacred Scriptures, has been constructed into a new Bible, and palmed off upon a company of poor deluded fanatics as divine. I have given the previous narration, that this work of deep deception and wickedness may be searched to the foundation and its author exposed to the contempt and execration he so justly deserves.

MATILDA DAVIDSON.

Rev. Solomon Spalding was the first husband of the narrator of the above history. Since his decease she has been married to a second husband, by the name of Davidson. She is now residing in this place, is a woman of irreproachable character, and an humble Christian, and her testimony, is worthy of implicit confidence. A. Ely, D.D., pastor of the Congregational Church, Monson. D. R. Austin, principal of Monson Academy. Monson, March 1, 1830.

The above has been carefully compared with a transcript taken from the files of the *Boston Recorder*, to secure an accurate copy of so important a document. A typographical error occurred in the *Recorder*, in which "Mormon

preacher” was printed “woman preacher.” The correction has been made on the authority of Rev. D.R. Austin, who acted as amanuensis for Mrs. Davidson. Pittsburg, March 25.

The history of the *Book of Mormon*, as it is generally accepted by unbelievers in Joseph Smith, is thus told by the *Springfield [Mass.] Republican*:

Remarkable local testimony has been discovered by the ‘Republican’ sustaining the charge that the religion of Joe Smith and Brigham Young had its origin in a romance written by Rev. Solomon Spalding, of Ohio, half a century or more ago. The story is furnished by Mr. J. A. McKinstry of Longmeadow, a son of the late Dr. McKinstry, of Monson, and grandson of Rev. Mr. Spalding. Rev. Mr. Spalding’s widow, who afterward became Mrs. Davidson, came east from Ohio to live with her daughter at Monson many years ago, bringing the manuscript of his romance with her. She died some twenty-five years ago, but before her death a plausible young man from Boston came to see her and get the Spalding writing. It was a time of considerable excitement concerning the Mormons, and he claimed to represent it some Christian people who wanted to expose Mormonism. He therefore begged the loan of the manuscript for publication. Much against the wishes of Mrs. Dr. McKinstry, Mrs. Davidson consented to let her husband’s unpublished romance go. Nothing was ever heard from it again, and the family have always considered that the bland young gentleman was an agent of Brigham Young to destroy this convincing evidence that Joe Smith’s Mormon bible was of very earthly origin. “The story of how Rev. Mr. Spalding came to prepare his romance, which Mr. McKinstry remembers as a child to have seen, is fresh and interesting. He was out of the active ministry in Ohio—the name of the place Mr. McKinstry does not recollect, but it was near Palmyra, we believe—running a small iron foundry; and being a man of literary tastes employed his leisure moments in weaving a romance. It was a time when the work of the mound-builders was creating wide interest, the implements of cookery and war being unearthed, showing the existence of a forgotten race. This furnished the inspiration for the chronicles of the story-writer. He entitled his production ‘Manuscript Found,’ the idea being that the romance woven by the ex-preacher was dug up out of one of the mounds in the region. It was a history of ancient America, not all written at once, but at leisure spells, and as the fancy fell to him Mr. Spalding would add to it. His writing was no secret in the neighborhood. In that then frontier region, with few opportunities for literary enjoyment, Mr. Spalding was prevailed upon to read his production, to his neighbors as it progressed. It was written in bible phraseology, and made as quaintly olden as possible, so as to carry out the conceit of its alleged mound origin. Among the attentive listeners at these readings were Joe Smith and Sidney Rigdon, the same who founded Mormonism. Not only did Smith hear the manuscript read, but on one occasion, as Mrs. Davidson frequently testified before her death, he borrowed it for a week or so, giving as a reason that he wanted to read it to his family, who had been unable to attend on Mr. Spalding’s readings. Not long afterward, it will be remembered, Smith claimed that an angel had revealed to him the existence of a buried history of aboriginal America, the plates of which it is alleged were dug up, and the Book of Mormon made as a translation of their inscriptions. The widow of Mr. Spalding and her daughter, Mrs. Dr. McKinstry, of Monson, compared the Smith bible with the pastor’s romance, and they were essentially the same. The similarity was so overwhelming as to leave no doubt that Smith copied in full Rev. Mr. Spalding’s writing, and made out of it bodily his divine ‘revelation.’ The character of the minister’s romance was such, and his elaboration of it so thorough as to strike the fancy of Smith, who was given to the mysterious. His family had been noted for divination, treasure-seeking, etc., and so Joe found Mr. Spalding’s work just in his line. That the results of his appropriation of it have been so stupendous was always a great cross to Mr. Spalding’s good widow, Mrs. Davidson. She mourned that, even innocently, her husband should have been the means of foisting upon the world so great an evil. This was the real reason of her willingness to allow the manuscript to be taken to Boston for publication. It is to be regretted that her family have not better preserved Mrs. Davidson’s recollections of her husband’s writing, now forever lost to the world. Enough has been handed down, however, to establish beyond doubt the truth of the claim that here was the source of Joe Smith’s ‘inspiration.’ Mrs. Davidson’s story has long been familiar to leading men of Monson, and so impressed was the late Rev. Dr. Ely, with it that he prepared a considerable account of it years ago.

VIEW OF THE HEBREWS SOURCE NUMBER 3

Other questions were raised about the authorship of the *Book of Mormon*. In addition to *Manuscript Found*, another work surfaced which was very similar in content. *View of the Hebrews* was written by Ethan Smith, one of Spalding’s seminary classmates.¹⁸⁰ This book presented the position which was held by nearly all the clergy in

¹⁸⁰ Holley, *Author...*, pg. 41-42.

America at the time, that the Indians were part of the lost tribes of Israel.¹⁸¹ It was published in 1823, the same year that Joseph Smith claimed to have his “First Vision.” Much of the material in it was apparently incorporated into the *Book of Mormon*.

B. H. Roberts, a General Authority of the Mormon Church, did an analysis of this book and its possible relation to the writing of the *Book of Mormon* in 1921 at the request of the leadership of the Mormon Church. His stated purpose was to review possible arguments by non-Mormons against the divine origin of the *Book of Mormon*. Interestingly enough, he came to the conclusion that View of the Hebrews could have been one of the human sources for the contents of the *Book of Mormon*, and that Joseph Smith was sufficiently intelligent to have written it with this book and other resources which were available to him.¹⁸²

His studies only recently became available to the public. They were published by the Utah Lighthouse Ministry of Salt Lake City under the name Roberts’ Manuscripts Revealed-A Photographic Reproduction of Mormon Historian B.H. Roberts’ Secret Studies on the *Book of Mormon*. Both it and the View of the Hebrews were closely examined by the author who confirms as valid the following conclusions which Roberts listed when comparing *View of the Hebrews*¹⁸³ and the *Book of Mormon*.

B.H. ROBERTS: A SCHOLAR WITH PROBLEMS

Mormon scholars have tried to justify their faith through the book of Mormon. All attempts are doomed to failure. In seeking to determine what problems they discovered some questions need to be answered.

B. H. Roberts is considered by some Mormon historians to be THE brightest intellectual of all the Mormon Leaders. His accomplishments include authoring Eight books of theology and nine of history, including the monumental six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church*.¹⁸⁴ Though in origin, a polemical work, the *Comprehensive History* comes nearer to history than many works done subsequently that professed historicity. “Roberts also wrote two volumes of biography, three of sermons and commentaries,... (he) seems fully justified in being regarded.. as the pioneer Utah equivalent of Renaissance Man.”¹⁸⁵

In addition, Leonard Arrington, who later became Church Historian wrote fifty “prominent L.D.S. intellectuals-all of them, I think with Ph.D. degrees or the equivalent. I asked them to list the five most eminent intellectuals in Mormon history. Thirty eight persons responded. Leading the list of those more frequently nominated was B.H. Roberts.”¹⁸⁶

Roberts began to formulate his defense of the *Book of Mormon* as a young missionary in Tennessee when he debated a Campbellite minister on the authority of the *Book of Mormon*. He thought he did well in the debate, so he continued his studies after completing his mission. In time he became recognized as the expert Mormon apologist and in 1909 he published his chief defense of the *Book of Mormon*, entitled, *New Witnesses for God*.¹⁸⁷ Roberts was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1898, but was never seated because he was a polygamist. He was a General Authority, a member of the then powerful First Council of the Seventy.

B. H. Roberts had many troubling thoughts about the *Book of Mormon* and being a true scholar, expressed many of them. One thought he communicated in a study was:

It will appear in what is to follow that such “common knowledge” did exist in New England, that Joseph Smith was in contact with it; that one book, at least, with which he was most likely acquainted, could well have furnished structural outlines for the Book of Mormon and that Joseph Smith was possessed with such

¹⁸¹ Wesley P. Walters, *The Human Origins Of The Book Of Mormon*, Safety Harbor, FLpubl. by Ex-Mormons for Jesus, 1979, pg. 4.

¹⁸² Brigham H. Roberts, *Roberts’ Manuscript Revealed: A Photographic Reproduction Of Mormon Historian B.H. Roberts’ Secret Studies On The Book Of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1980, pg. 123, 155.

¹⁸³ Ethan Smith, *View of The Hebrews*, 2nd ed. (1825: Photomechanical Reprint, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, n.d.)

¹⁸⁴ Salt Lake City, 1930

¹⁸⁵ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1969, p. 23.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁷ James R. Spencer, *Through the Maze*, Idaho Falls, ID

*creative imaginative powers as would make it quite within the lines of possibility that the Book of Mormon could have been produced in that way.*¹⁸⁸

THE EVIDENCE

Roberts came to this conclusion from a detailed study he made of the Ethan Smith book, *View of the Hebrews*, which was first published in 1823 with a second edition published in 1825 (*The Book of Mormon* was first published in 1830). Simply put, he discovered that there were many things in the *View of the Hebrews* that would have suggested many major things in the *Book of Mormon*: “Not a few things merely, one or two, or a half dozen, but many, and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them, that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith’s story of the *Book of Mormon*’s origin.”

The B.H. Roberts’ two above mentioned manuscripts themselves have been continuously in the Roberts family since his death in 1933. However, his grandson made copies available to several scholars and the University of Utah Library has a copy¹⁸⁹.

THE DOUBTS BEGIN

In 1921 an event occurred which forever changed Roberts’ life. William Riter, a young Mormon from Salina, Utah wrote to Apostle James E. Talmage with five questions (which will be discussed later in this chapter) challenging the *Book of Mormon*. Riter was forwarding the questions from a man in Washington, D.C. who was investigating the claims of Mormonism. Talmage was then too busy to answer the questions, sent the letter on to Roberts who began an investigation which would trouble him until his death in 1933. The study deeply challenged his faith in the *Book of Mormon*.

The depth of Roberts’ personal struggle over the matter is recorded in three documents he produced in the years before he died. None of these works were published during Roberts’ lifetime, but they are now available (A comprehensive study of these documents is published as *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois).

Roberts delayed four months before replying to William Riter’s questions. Riter finally wrote to him, asking if he had completed his response.

On December 28, 1921, Roberts wrote back saying he was studying the problems, had not yet reached a conclusion and would soon respond. The next day Roberts wrote an open letter to President Heber J. Grant, to Grant’s counselors, to The Twelve Apostles and to the First Council of Seventy, requesting an emergency meeting with all of them to discuss the matter. He told the General Authorities:

“I found the difficulties (raised by the five questions) more serious than I thought it is a matter that will concern the faith of the Youth of the Church now (and) also in the future....”

President Grant acted immediately. Within a week he assembled the brethren for two days of intense meetings at which Roberts delivered a 141 page report entitled, *Book of Mormon Difficulties, A Study*.

Roberts asked for the collective wisdom of the brethren and the inspiration of the Lord in order to answer the questions.

DISAPPOINTED

Roberts met a stone wall at the meeting. He came away after the two days disappointed and discouraged. In a letter to President Grant four days after the meeting he said,

¹⁸⁸ *Book of Mormon Study*, a 291 page unpublished manuscript by B.H. Roberts, pg. Part I, Ch. I, pg. 8.

¹⁸⁹ Copies may be obtained from Modern Microfilm Co. Box 1884, SLC, Utah 84110. The manuscripts are also discussed in Volume III, No. 3 of the *Journal of Pastoral Practice*, pp. 123-152.

... *I was greatly disappointed over the net results of the discussion ... (because) ... there was so much said that was utterly irrelevant and so little said ... that was helpful...*

Roberts continued to discuss the matter through letter with President Grant and continued for some months to meet with a committee formed out of the larger group comprised of one of Grant's counselors and Talmage and Apostle John Widsoe. But Roberts never was satisfied with the response of the brethren.

As his investigation continued, he became more and more disillusioned with the *Book of Mormon*. And he always resented the response he received at the two-day seminar. Two months before his death he told a friend, Wesley P. Lloyd, former dean of the graduate school of BYU, that the defense the brethren made for the *Book of Mormon* might satisfy people who didn't think, but (it was) a very inadequate answer for a thinking man". He said Apostle Richard R. Lyman did not take the matter seriously and the others, "merely one by one stood up and bore testimony to the truthfulness of the *Book of Mormon*. George Albert Smith in tears testified that his faith in the Book had not been shaken by the question."

Roberts told Lloyd he did not criticize the brethren for not being able to answer the questions, but said, "... that in a Church which claimed continuous revelation, a crisis had arisen where revelation was necessary."

REVELATION NOT FORTHCOMING

The Church seemed to be at a loss to deal with the five questions (see later in this chapter). Roberts was most concerned about the linguistic problem. But as he studied, he discovered new problems. He told Lloyd he saw literary problems in the *Book of Mormon* as well as geographic problems. Where were the Mayan cliffs and high mountain peaks in the *Book of Mormon*? The geography of the *Book of Mormon* looked suspiciously like the New England of Joseph Smith.

Roberts eventually concluded that Joseph Smith wrote the *Book of Mormon* himself--that he did not translate it from gold plates. That he produced it by drawing upon his own natural talent and materials like Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* (published near Joseph's home a few years before the "translation" of the *Book of Mormon*).

ROBERTS' REACTION

Roberts became convinced that *View of the Hebrews* was "the ground plan" for the *Book of Mormon*. Incredibly, this man who had started his missionary career defending the *Book of Mormon* and became its staunchest apologist had to admit, as the evidence unfolded that Joseph Smith was a plagiarist.

THE SIMILARITIES

Mr. Roberts then proceeds to cover the many similarities between the book, *View of the Hebrews*, and the *Book of Mormon*. Did Roberts believe that Joseph's family knew of the *View of the Hebrews* book? Here is what he said: "This study proposed that it is more than likely that the Smith family possessed a copy of this book by Ethan Smith, that either by reading it, or hearing it read, and its contents frequently discussed, Joseph Smith became acquainted with its contents."¹⁹⁰ Did Roberts think that Ethan Smith's book was similar only because both it and the *Book of Mormon* claimed that the origin of the American Indian was the Hebrews? Not only that "...but in many ways, and at many points, as we shall see, *Book of Mormon* traits, in language, culture, the knowledge and the use of metals, traditions, religion and even the structure of the *Book of Mormon* the material compiled in Ethan Smith's book might well be taken as suggesting many things in the *Book of Mormon*..."¹⁹¹

What about all those quotes from Isaiah in the *Book of Mormon*. Roberts observes: "But may not this be accounted for by the fact that Mr. Ethan Smith practically does the same thing in his *Views of the Hebrews*? That is, he quotes chiefly from Isaiah in support of his views concerning Israel their dispersion, their restoration and their glorification--and the author of the *Book of Mormon* following him does the same thing."¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, Part I, II, 1ff

¹⁹¹ B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, Part I, II, 12

¹⁹² B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, Part I, IV, 6

One can sympathize with the elderly Roberts who realized he had spent a lifetime defending something he came to see was a fraud. It is heartbreaking. It is, perhaps, this fraudulent perpetration of the *Book of Mormon* that is the most heartbreaking aspect of Mormonism. As Mormon Apostle, Orson Pratt declared of the *Book of Mormon*:

"If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man. If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who sincerely receive it as the Word of God, and will suppose themselves built upon the rock of truth, until they are plunged, with their families, into hopeless despair."

What was the final resolution for Brigham H. Roberts? No one can say for sure. However, I am afraid for him. I fear that this giant intellectual, who could stand against the president of the Church and call the Apostles to task, committed intellectual suicide.

Return with me to the conversation he had with Wesley Lloyd, just two months before his death. Lloyd tells us that Roberts showed him "a revolutionary article on the origin of the *Book of Mormon*". In Lloyd's opinion, the work was "far too strong for the average Church member."

What Lloyd saw was, "A *Book of Mormon* Study." In that 300-page document, Roberts sets forth why *View of the Hebrews* must have been a source for the *Book of Mormon*. Roberts' study is divided into two parts. Part I concludes with Roberts' investigation of "the imaginative mind of Joseph Smith." He concludes that Joseph could have made the *Book of Mormon* up out of his own mind. He quotes Joseph's mother as she recalled how Joseph would give "amusing recitals" in which he would describe "the ancient inhabitants of this continent their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship." All this, Roberts acknowledges, "took place before the young prophet had received the plates of the *Book of Mormon*."

The *Book of Mormon*, he argues, must be of human origin. And if it is, so must be the rest of the work of Joseph Smith. "His revelations become merely human productions ..." In Part II, Roberts examines the "internal evidence that the *Book of Mormon* is of human origin."

He also discovered that throughout the *Book of Mormon* the "conversion accounts" are strikingly similar to "a good Christian 'experience' ... of the period 1820-1830."

Morbid imagination, morbid expression of emotions (were) likely to find their way into the knowledge of Joseph Smith and influence his conceptions of spiritual things...

Roberts suggests that Smith became caught up in spiritual "excesses" out of which he imagined prophecies and manifestations. Indeed, Roberts thought the *Book of Mormon* itself was given to such "ultra-protestant" excesses. Roberts, according to Lloyd, concluded that Smith's visions were "psychological" and that the gold plates "were not objective."

What does that mean, "not objective"? It means they didn't really exist! They existed only on a "spiritual", or subjective plane. If Roberts "psychological" escape sounds familiar you may remember the article, "The Emerging Mormon Liberal." Quoting the former Mormon Church Historian, Leonard J. Arrington, he claimed, "... it was no longer important if Joseph Smith had any of the early visions he claimed to have had!"¹⁹³

COPIED MISTAKES

One of the problems with *View of the Hebrews* is that some of the "guesses" that it made concerning early American natives such as the use of steel and navigation have proven nonexistent by modern archaeologists. However, it seems that the *Book of Mormon*, like Ethan Smith's book, contained references to these now known, mistakes. As Mr. Roberts asks: "Could it be that the author of the *Book of Mormon* ... proceeded arbitrarily to thrust into his alleged history the mention of these materials and the art of using them among his Nephites in order to comply with the supposed knowledge outlined in Ethan Smith's book"¹⁹⁴. This leaves Roberts asking "did the author of the *Book of Mormon* innocently follow Ethan Smith into error of supposing the civilized part of the ancient inhabitants of America had an 'iron and steel' culture... and emphasize both its existence and its extent?" Mr. Roberts noted that

¹⁹³ J. Ed Decker, *Through the Maze*, Issue No. 11, Saints Alive, Issaquah, WA.

¹⁹⁴ B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, Part I, VIII, 6f.

the *Book of Mormon* structure was surprisingly similar to Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and wanted to "call attention to the fact that from eight to five years before the *Book of Mormon* was published, there was in existence a book that contained an enumeration of particulars that enter into the *Book of Mormon*, and become its peculiar characteristics."¹⁹⁵

THE COMPARISONS

Roberts then makes many, many comparisons between the two works. For instance, he states: "Can there be any doubt, but what the things said in Ethan Smith's book, on the matter of the "Urim and Thummim," "Breast Plates" and "curious stones" and "attachments to breast plates" -all published from eight to five years before the *Book of Mormon* was, are sufficient to suggest the Urim and Thummim as described by Joseph Smith?"¹⁹⁶ What about Joseph's mind? Did he have sufficient imagination to take the information from various sources such as the *View of the Hebrews* and weave it into the *Book of Mormon*? Using the *History of the Prophet Joseph Smith by His Mother*, Roberts notes that Joseph's mother wrote that BEFORE Joseph ever claimed to have translated the Golden Plates, he would sit with his family and describe the ancient inhabitants of America their dress, animals, cities, warfare, and religious worship, and that Joseph described these with "as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his own life among them."¹⁹⁷ Where did Joseph get these descriptions? Roberts asks and then answers his own question:

"Not from the *Book of Mormon*, which is, as yet, a sealed book to him..."

[B. H. Roberts] came to the conclusion that *View of the Hebrews* could have been one of the human sources for the contents of the *Book of Mormon*, and that Joseph Smith was sufficiently intelligent to have written it with this book and other resources which were available to him.

1. Both books begin with "the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel" at 600 B.C.¹⁹⁸
2. Ethan Smith, the author, begins his second chapter by quoting from Isaiah to prove that Judah and Israel will be restored in the last days. "One of the passages quoted" is from Isaiah 11, and this is one of the quotes that Joseph Smith claimed the Angel Moroni made to him when it visited him the first time on September 23rd, 1823, telling him of the golden plates¹⁹⁹.
3. Ethan Smith quotes from "20 chapters of Isaiah" in the fourth chapter of his book to prove his point. Joseph Smith quotes from "21 chapters of Isaiah" in the first one hundred pages of the *Book of Mormon* to make the same point. In both cases, they are quoted in the only version of the Bible in common use in that day, the King James Version. "Many of the passages quoted ... are identical."²⁰⁰
4. Ethan Smith quotes from Isaiah 18, citing it as a call upon the Christian Church in the United States to convert the Indians to Christianity. While the *Book of Mormon* itself does not cite this chapter, it makes the same point repeatedly²⁰¹.
5. Both reported the use of iron and steel by the ancient inhabitants of America²⁰².
6. Both report vast multitudes once filled North America²⁰³.
7. Both report use of the Urim and Thummim by the ancient Indians²⁰⁴.
8. Both are against polygamy²⁰⁵.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, Part I, IX, 2.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, Part I, IX, 13

¹⁹⁷ *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pg. 83.

¹⁹⁸ Roberts, *ibid.*, pg. 156.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 156-157.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 159-161.

²⁰¹ e.g., 1 Nephi 13:39; 3:191; Wesley P. Walters, *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol III, No. 3, pg. 12.

²⁰² Roberts, *ibid.*, pg. 203-204.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, pg. 207.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, pg. 220.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pg. 229-230.

9. Both report that the Indians once had a holy book, but lost it and fell out of favor with God²⁰⁶.

10. Both speak of Egyptian hieroglyphics in America (Roberts, pg. 237).

11. Both have a division into two peoples; one civilized and one barbarian. Both depict wars between them with the extinction of the civilized people²⁰⁷.

12. Both depict knowledge of the mechanical arts, written language and one God as typical of the ancient Americans²⁰⁸.

13. Both proclaim destruction of the disobedient gentiles by converted Indians. This prophecy is given three times in the *Book of Mormon* by Jesus Christ himself (III Nephi 16:8-16; 7:32-42; III Nephi 20:14-17; 9:50-53; III Nephi 21:11-13; 9:98-100)²⁰⁹.

Concerning this prophecy, Roberts makes the following observation:

All this might have seemed possible to men living in the early decades of the 19th century, 1820-1830, when Indian tribes of unknown strength but well attested ferocity occupied the greater part of the land over which the United States now extends its jurisdiction, but it is scarcely possible now to entertain such conceptions of native race terror, triumph, and domination over the Gentile nation of the United States. All reasonable expectation of such an event has passed²¹⁰.

THE TOTAL EMBARRASSMENT OF BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY

Initially, the early Mormon Leaders THOUGHT they understood *Book of Mormon* geography. Essentially, there was the reference to North and South America²¹¹ (“...they did multiply and spread from the land southward to the land northward .. from the sea west to the sea east.”) And there was the reference to Panama²¹² (“...by the narrow neck which led into the land northward.” and “And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land they did preserve the land southward...the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants²¹³.”)

The easiest way to see how the early Mormon Leaders view the *Book of Mormon* geography is to get a copy of Elder George Reynolds extraordinary 852 page book *A Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon* first printed in 1899²¹⁴. This work took 21 years for Reynolds to complete. (He started it while in prison for a polygamy conviction) He was a General Authority of the Mormon Church and no beginner when it came to the *Book of Mormon*. In addition to the remarkable “Concordance” he also was the author of a.) *Book of Mormon Chronological Chart*, b.) *Story of the Book of Mormon*, c.) *Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*, and d) a series of articles on the history of the Book of Mormon. This devout Mormon, born while the Prophet Joseph Smith was still alive, was well acquainted with what the Mormon Leaders and the *Book of Mormon* said about geography. North, Central and South America.

The following names and descriptions are taken from his “Concordance” to give you the prevalent “geography” before the current scholars caused all kinds of problems:

“AKISHA place in North America, apparently not far from the Atlantic Coast.”

“BOAZA city situated a short distance north of the isthmus of Panama.”

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pg. 232.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 276.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pg. 275-276.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 175.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 177.

²¹¹ *B of M*, Helaman 3:8.

²¹² *B of M*, Alma 63:5.

²¹³ *B of M*, Ether 10:20-21.

²¹⁴ 1976 edition available in Mormon Deseret Book Stores.

“CUMORAH hill and the district immediately surrounding it in Ontario County, State of New York. It was known as Ramah to the Jaredites. In its vicinity both the Jaredite and the Nephite races were destroyed in battle.”

“LEHIL and of, the name by which THE WHOLE OF SOUTH AMERICA WAS KNOWN TO THE NEPHITES.”

“MANTIL and of, the western HALF OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN CONTINENT...”

“MORON in some part of the region which we know as CENTRAL AMERICA...”

“MULKEKL and of, the name given by the Nephites to the WHOLE OF NORTH AMERICA....”

“NEPHIL and of, the GREATER PORTION OF SOUTH AMERICA...”

“RIPLIANCUM Supposed by some to be Lake Ontario, but EVIDENTLY ONE OF THE GREAT CHAIN OF LAKES.”

“SIDON River, the most important river in Nephite History; KNOWN TODAY AS THE MAGDALENA. It runs northward through the United States of Columbia and empties into the Carribean Sea.”

“ZARAHEMPLA. Land of ... there were two lands of Zarahemla; THE ONE OCCUPYING THE WHOLE OF SOUTH AMERICA...”

Thus we have one of the Mormon Church’s “experts” as well as being a “General Authority” claiming that the *Book of Mormon* covered NORTH AMERICA²¹⁵ to the whole of SOUTH AMERICA²¹⁶ and including Panama²¹⁷ My how things have changed NOW.

One might ask if the Mormon Church encourages its followers to study the specific subject of the *Book of Mormon* geography. Since the Church has spent enormous amount of money in an effort to find evidence in Central and South America supporting the *Book of Mormon*, one might expect a major focus of study within the church. For example, from 1948 to 1961 the Department of archaeology at BYU sent five archaeological expeditions to Middle America, but they found no evidence of the “Nephites.” Now the Church funds the “New World Archaeological Foundation” which is staffed by Mormons and non-Mormons and makes no mention of the *Book of Mormon* in its findings. As more and more evidence comes forth, none of which supports *Book of Mormon* claims, the Mormon Leaders are actively encouraging their members to leave *Book of Mormon* geography alone. One fall-back position taken by the Church: “The geography of the *Book of Mormon* has intrigued some readers of the volume ever since its publication. But why worry about it? ... To guess where Zarahemla stood can in no wise add to anyone’s faith. But to raise doubts in people’s minds about the location of the Hill Cumorah, and thus challenge the words of the prophets concerning the place when Moroni buried the records, is most certainly harmful. And who has the right to raise doubts in anyone’s mind? Our position is to build faith, not to weaken it, and theories concerning the geography of the *Book of Mormon* can most certainly undermine faith if allowed to run rampant²¹⁸.”

It is not difficult to imagine that investigating the *Book of Mormon* geography might undermine faith. The linchpin of the faith, the hill on which the plates were discovered places an onerous burden on the Mormon investigator. So crushing the burden that *Book of Mormon* scholars, so called, can’t even decide on which continent the Hill Cumorah is—is it in New York where Joseph Smith said it was, or is it in Central or South America where those who carefully studied the statements in the *Book of Mormon* say it must be?

The Mormon missionaries will probably repeat the rehearsed line, if asked, that it is in New York State. If the difficult question of geographical evidence is presented they will probably revert to the fact that they know the *Book of Mormon* is “true.”

On one hand, you have Leaders of the Mormon Church such as Joseph Fielding Smith, who became the tenth “Prophet President” of the Church, say emphatically that the Hill Cumorah was in New York state.

²¹⁵ George Reynolds, *A Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon*, 1899, (see Mulek, Land of. p. 479).

²¹⁶ *ibid.*, see Zarahemla, Land of. p. 849.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, see Boaz, City of. p. 97.

²¹⁸ *Deseret News*, Church section, July 29, 1978.

This is probably because that is where Joseph Smith and the other early Church Leaders said it was. Apostle Smith takes 9 pages in the book *Doctrines of Salvation*²¹⁹, showing that the Prophet Joseph Smith and his colleagues taught that the Hill Cumorah was in New York where Joseph got the plates.

It might seem that the easiest position to take is to say that it is in New York and forget it. The Leaders of the Mormon Church would very much like to do just that BUT, and this is becoming a sore point with them, devout Mormons who have spent years and years studying the *Book of Mormon* say that it is impossible for the Hill Cumorah to be in New York.

Nile Washburn's account takes the believer to another continent:

"...the most important consideration in the geography of the Book of Mormon is the problem whether the Jaredites (and subsequently the Nephites) made a tremendous migration at the very end of their national existence from their homeland of hundreds of years to the present Hill Cumorah in New York State²²⁰." And what conclusion did Mr. Washburn come to? In spite of Apostle Orson Pratt and BYU professor Sidney Sperry believing that the Book of Mormon people also lived in the New England, he states he personally believed that "It is true that the Jaredites were annihilated at the hill which the Nephites later called Cumorah, but this is not at someplace thousands of miles distant. I repeat: where the Jaredites landed (Central America) there they lived, and there they died²²¹."

Washburn is not alone in his beliefs. Other scholars share his views that the Hill Cumorah is in Central America. But there are many who sincerely believe that it is impossible to reconcile the geography of the *Book of Mormon* with a New York location for Cumorah. In her 161 page book²²², Venice Priddis writes in her "Acknowledgements" that:

Most of all I am indebted to those ancient prophets who, under inspiration, wrote into what is primarily a religious record sufficient geographical information to make it possible to define the ancient lands on the modern map.

One can see the reader pulling out a large copy of Rand McNally to try and put things in their proper perspective on a modern map. Unfortunately, Mrs. Priddis was not successful in that regard. Mrs. Priddis, who taught Mormon Seminary for eight years tells us:

Accordingly if the Jaredites named their hill as they named the waters of Ripiancum, for certain characteristics, the name 'the hill Ramah' could signify a hill which rises up from a highland or plateau, or a hill of imposing height. Either description alone, or both together, fit perfectly the cerro Imbabura, which rises up from the elevated inter-Andean highlands²²³."

If the Hill Cumorah is determined to be in South America from studying the *Book of Mormon* (in spite of Joseph Smith saying that it is in New York), the first question that comes to mind is how the ancient plates got from the Hill Cumorah in South America to the hill in New York where Joseph discovered them. As Mrs. Priddis states on the last page of her book:

We cannot know how a lone man, of himself, could have made the long trek from South America to North America to bury the plates in a hill in New York State..."But, she adds: "Clearly, all things are possible with God²²⁴ and the way was opened for Moroni to place the Book of Mormon record in the North American hill where many centuries later it would be brought forth to the world by the great prophet and seer of the last dispensation, Joseph Smith."

This of course, does not address the "problem" suggested by Mormon Prophet Brigham Young when talking about the "New York" Hill Cumorah.

²¹⁹ Vol. 3, pp. 232-241.

²²⁰ Nile Washburn, *Book of Mormon Lands and Times*, 1974, pg. 277.

²²¹ *ibid.*, pg. 269.

²²² Venice Priddis, *The Book and the Map-New Insights into Book of Mormon Geography*, 1975, "Acknowledgements"

²²³ *ibid.*, pg. 56-57.

²²⁴ *B of M*, Alma 7:8.

“Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room ... They laid the plates on a table, it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high and there were altogether in this room MORE PLATES THAN PROBABLY MANY WAGONLOADS...”²²⁵

This would have been a challenge for a lone man, by himself, from South America to North America, to bury the plates...

Not having resolved the question to any degree of satisfaction, there are other theories. Dr. David A. Palmer states that it's his theory “that Mormon's Cumorah was a hill called Cerro (Hill) Viga (pronounced Vee-hee-ah), which is located along the Gulf Coast in southern Veracruz State”²²⁶.

These scholarly studies which seem to have employed a great deal of research seem to place at odds, the firm statement of faith by Joseph Fielding Smith. Other church leaders seem to be in the same boat as all appear to have taught that Cumorah was in New York. Dr. Palmer, in an attempt to distance himself from controversy, says:

*We will make no attempt to resolve statements of Book of Mormon geography by other Church authorities, but will only try to reconcile the text of the Book of Mormon itself with physical geographical and archaeological findings*²²⁷

A faithful believer might ask what difference it makes whether the Hill Cumorah was in Central America, South America or New York. An honest scholar would quickly point out the fact that the distance and the improbability that an individual would trek the hundreds of miles necessary to rebury them six miles from the where Joseph would one day live. Another honest scholar continues to hammer home the point:

Many *Book of Mormon* scholars assert that the Hill Cumorah is in what is now New York state. To justify that assertion disrupts and confuses the entire concept of *Book of Mormon* geography. To correctly correlate that hill with other countries and places named in the sacred record it must be placed on a map so as to show consistency and harmony in the travels of the *Book of Mormon* peoples. All of the places and countries named in the record may be consistently assembled on a map which may cover some of the countries now known as Mexico and Central America. This cannot be done if the Hill Cumorah is placed on a map in the vicinity of what is now Palmyra, New York²²⁸.

FIVE HUNDRED MILE RADIUS?

This problem is stated another way by the Mormon archaeologist Joseph E. Vincent in the “Fourteenth Annual symposium On The Archeology Of The Scriptures,”²²⁹

In conclusion, let me reiterate that if a sincere student of the Book of Mormon will conscientiously read and study the book itself and will plot out all the locations mentioned, disregarding ‘off the cuff’ remarks of early Church Leaders, he will find that all Book of Mormon lands lie within a five or six-hundred mile radius and that this area could not possibly extend from Chile to New York.

If one carefully plots out the cities and travels within the *Book of Mormon* it becomes apparent that the Hill Cumorah mentioned in the book²³⁰ must be within five or six hundred miles of the other *Book of Mormon* cities and lands. At least that is the way it might appear and it might not be argued if one was also to agree that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were not prophets.

FIVE HUNDRED MILES? THAT WOULD BE A STRETCH!

²²⁵ J.D., 19:38.

²²⁶ Dr. David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah*, 1981, pg. 19.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 23.

²²⁸ Fletcher Hammond, *Geography of The Book of Mormon*, 1959, pp. 72-73.

²²⁹ *BYU Studies*, 1963, pp 67-68

²³⁰ *B of M*, Mormon 6:2-6, 8:2; Ether 15:11.

You see, both made statements that the *Book of Mormon* peoples were NOT confined to a five hundred mile radius. In fact, it was pretty clear that THEIR *Book of Mormon* peoples were all over North America as well as Central America. For example, Joseph Smith identified the ancient city of Manti²³¹ as his group passed through Huntsville, Randolph County, Missouri²³². And on May 19, 1838 Joseph pointed out “the remains of an old Nephite altar or tower...”²³³ And earlier, on June 1, 1834, the Prophet Joseph “visited several of the mounds which had been thrown up by the ancient inhabitants of this country-Nephites, Lamanites,... discovered the skeleton of a man... a white Lamanite... He was a warrior and chieftain under the great prophet Onandagus, who was known from the Hill Cumorah, or eastern sea to the Rocky Mountains.. he was killed in battle... during the last great struggle of the Lamanites and Nephites²³⁴” Incidentally, this skeleton’s name was “Zelph” and the location was in Illinois. The Mormon “Prophet” Brigham Young also identified North American sites as *Book of Mormon* lands. When he selected the site for the St. George (Utah) Temple he “explained that the Temple must be built at that place, because the Nephites had previously dedicated that very site for the erection of a Temple, but had been unable to bring their hopes to full fruition²³⁵.” He also identified the St. George area where the Gadianton robbers²³⁶ were found²³⁷.

In addition, Brigham Young said that the Prophet Moroni had previously dedicated the exact location of the Manti (Utah) Temple and that is why it had to be built there²³⁸. Other Mormon Leaders also made similar claims. Joseph’s friend and Apostle Orson Pratt said: “The Hill Cumorah is situated in western New York.. It is distinguished as the great battlefield on which, and near which, two powerful nations were concentrated with all their forces...”²³⁹

DON’T LET THEM KID YOU ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON ARCHAEOLOGY

We often see picture books of Central and South America showing ancient ruins that “prove” the *Book of Mormon* is true. One of the most famous Mormon paintings is found in many of their churches. It shows Jesus preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of ancient America, replete with buildings that bear the unmistakable likeness of Maya architecture. One might ask how much “proof” archaeology provides towards the truth of *Book of Mormon*? The answer, in a word is “none.”

There are books by BYU Professor Cheesman and others who feel pictures of ruins in South America prove that the *Book of Mormon* is true. This could be based more on faith and less on intellectual study. The archaeology of Central and South America not only fail to give evidence of the *Book of Mormon* but, more and more, tend to prove it false.

The study of Yale professor, Michael Coe, who happens to be one of the world’s experts on Central American archaeology and who has authored several books on the subject leaves little after all the facts have been gathered. He speaks candidly in his nine page article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. He writes:

The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere”²⁴⁰

Not content to simply brush aside claims based on incomplete research, he covered every aspect raised in previous works that sought to authenticate the *Book of Mormon*, geographically. He continues:

“First of all there is an inherent improbability in specific items that are mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* as having been brought to the New World by the Jaredites and/or Nephites. Among these are the horse (extinct in the New World since about 7,000 B.C.), the chariot, wheat, barley, and metallurgy (true metalworking based upon smelting and casting being no earlier in Mesoamerica than about 800 AD) The picture of the hemisphere between 2,000 B.C. and AD 421 presented in the book has little to do with the early Indian cultures as we know them, in spite of much

²³¹ *B of M*, Alma 56:14.

²³² Jenson, *Historical Record*, Book 1, p. 601.

²³³ *D.H.C.* 3:35.

²³⁴ *D.H.C.* 2:79-80.

²³⁵ McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, p. 156.

²³⁶ *B of M*, 4 Nephi 1:46.

²³⁷ Lundwall, *Temples of the Most High*, p. 86.

²³⁸ Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 477.

²³⁹ Lundwall, *Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt*, p. 390.

²⁴⁰ Michael Coe, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1973, p. 46.

wishful thinking... “The Book describes three migrations to the New World by groups from Palestine, and the events that transpired after their arrival in this hemisphere... the time span for the first migrants, the Jaredites, runs from the tower of Babel incident, around 3000 (or 2000) B.C., to their self-destruction between 600 and 200 B.C.; [LDS] scholars like Hunter thus identify them with the archaeological Olmec, even though research by myself and others into Olmec remains has failed to reveal any basis for this assertion. The Nephite story, the main subject matter of the Book includes Lehi and his followers and the Mulekites, and extends from about 600 B.C. to their final annihilation in 385 AD. This chronology means that a *Book of Mormon* archaeologist would necessarily have to concentrate on the formative period of Mesoamerica. But how is one to reconcile this dating with the flat statement of Joseph Smith himself that Palenque was a Nephite city? This Maya center was built after 600 AD, according to all modern scholarship, some 215 years after the Nephites had been wiped from the surface of the earth. I can only sympathize with the Mormon scholar who has to work that one out!”²⁴¹

Dr. Coe concludes with little hope for the Mormon investigator:

*In conclusion, an outside observer like myself would make these suggestions. Forget the so-far fruitless quest for the Jaredites, Nephites, Mulekites, and the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful: there is no more chance of finding them than of discovering the ruins of the bottomless pit described in the book of Revelation.... Continue the praiseworthy excavations in Mexico, remembering that little or nothing pertaining to the Book of Mormon will ever result from them*²⁴².

In his article, Professor Coe suggests that as many Mormon archaeologists become more familiar with the archaeology of central America they become less sure of the *Book of Mormon*: “Unlike the *Book of Mormon* geographers, the *Book of Mormon* archaeologists of the UAS and its successor, the SEHA, have undertaken real fieldwork in southeastern Mexico. By so doing some of its members have changed themselves from *Book of Mormon* archaeologists into archaeologists who happen to be Mormons.”²⁴³

This places the “good” Mormon archaeologist in a difficult predicament as he discovers the stark lack of any evidence for the *Book of Mormon* in archaeology. Professor Coe observes three “escapes” from the dilemma of believing the Mormon faith but finding no evidence of *Book of Mormon* archaeology. They are to, 1) just stay away from the whole issue of archaeology on the grounds that you can’t really prove anything that way anyway, 2) just view the *Book of Mormon* as a source of mores and guidance and not as a real historical record, and 3) apostasy. Of the last Coe states: “The third way out of the dilemma is apostasy. I will not dwell further on this painful subject, but merely point out that many unusually gifted scholars who I count as friends have taken exactly this route.”²⁴⁴

We would expect that any good Latter-Day Saint who was thoroughly familiar with the archaeology of Central America would have even a firmer conviction that the book is truer than say, a missionary, who is not at all familiar with archaeology. This is not true. The less you know, the easier it will be to believe the *Book of Mormon* is true. For example. One of the strongest believers in the *Book of Mormon* was T.S. Ferguson who wrote at least three books on archaeology and the *Book of Mormon* and was president of the New World Archaeological Foundation. “In 1961, the New World Archaeological Foundation was attached to Brigham Young University as an agency for field research in Mesoamerica. This organization had been a creation of Thomas Stuart Ferguson The Foundation has served BYU as its exclusive agent for archaeological excavations in Mesoamerica using LDS Church funds, and large appropriations have been spent in field research”²⁴⁵ . Just what did Ferguson hope to accomplish with all of this “field research?” He wrote in his book, *One Fold and One Shepherd*: “The important thing now is to continue the digging at an accelerated pace in order to find more inscriptions dating to *Book of Mormon* times. Eventually we should find decipherable inscriptions in modified Egyptian, in a modified or pure Hebrew or in a cuneiform, referring to some unique person, place or event in the *Book of Mormon*.”²⁴⁶

Mr. Ferguson, after spending 25 years trying to prove the *Book of Mormon* true, had the integrity of a courageous scholar to admit “I lost faith in Joseph Smith as one having a pipeline to deity-and have decided that there has never been a pipeline to deity-with any man.... I give Joseph Smith credit as an innovator and a smart fellow. I attend, sing in the choir and enjoy my friendship in the Church. In my opinion it is the best fraternity that has come to my attention... I think that Joseph Smith may have had Ixtilxoctl and View of the Hebrews from which to work...

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 42,45.

²⁴² *ibid.*, pg. 48.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, pg. 44

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pg. 47.

²⁴⁵ *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society For Early Historic Archaeology*, BYU, June, 1970, p. 7.

²⁴⁶ Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *One Fold and One Shepherd*, pg. 263.

Oliver Cowdery was in Ethan's Smith's [writer of *View of the Hebrews*] congregation before he went from Vermont to New York to join Joseph Smith²⁴⁷

FALSE BOOK OF MORMON MAY STILL BE VALUABLE

The then president of the Mormon History Association, William D. Russell (who also served as chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences at RLDS Graceland College), expressed his honest feelings about his years of studying the *Book of Mormon*: "We are led to the like conclusion that the *Book of Mormon* should not be regarded as a historical account of ancient people who inhabited the Americas. Whether the *Book of Mormon* merits a place in the canon of scripture may or may not depend upon whether it contains accounts of actual historical events. IN MY VIEW IT DOES NOT."²⁴⁸ Why would he come to such a conclusion?

WHY THE BOOK IS FALSE

In his article, Russell lists ten reasons in two books of the *Book of Mormon*, i.e. I Nephi and II Nephi. He points out many inconsistencies with Israelite Old Testament thinking and Lehi (an Israelite) in the *Book of Mormon*. He also points out the problems with the Sermon on the Mount in III Nephi since, in the *Book of Mormon* (III Nephi 12:3) the Savior used essentially the same sermon that is recorded in Matthew 5:7. The *Book of Mormon* account records that Jesus was using this precise language in "AD 34" while the gospel of Matthew is generally dated 40 to 70 years LATER. Even then, the original Greek omitted 'are' in 'blessed are.' (Mat 5:3-10) and 'men' (Mat 5:11). These words were supplied by the translators commissioned by King James, in 1611. The comparisons between 3 Nephi 12 and Matthew 5, aside from each having the same number of verses is interesting in other regards. Probably the most significant fact was the ability of the writer of AD 34 to speak polished Elizabethan English. Unfortunately, this prosaic language faded from the scene over a hundred years before Joseph Smith came on the plates made their remarkable appearance.

WHY UTAH MORMONS AVOID HISTORIC PROBLEMS

In his article, Russell observed that most Mormons stay away from this problem of the historicity of the book because to the majority of the rank-and-file Saints "if the *Book of Mormon* is not a historical account of actual people, then the whole foundation of Latter-Day Saintism is destroyed. While I disagree with this assumption, I can understand why many Mormons would feel this way."²⁴⁹

HOW CAN FALSE HISTORY STILL BE VALUABLE?

So if the *Book of Mormon* is not a history of real people, just how is it of value to the followers of Joseph Smith? "We can hold that Joseph Smith wrote it;.... And we can still hold that the book has a legitimate place in the canon of scripture for Latter-Day Saints... if we read it as a writing of Joseph Smith, from which we can grow spiritually... the *Book of Mormon* is important for us NOT IN GIVING US EVENTS TO AFFIRM AS HISTORICALLY ACCURATE, but rather in helping us become better disciples of the one whom the book claims to be a 'second witness.'"²⁵⁰

THE KING JAMES BIBLE SOURCE NUMBER 4

The LDS Church now concedes that Smith used the King James Bible as one of his primary sources when it came to extended quotes from the Bible²⁵¹. The long passages quoted from Isaiah as well as from Malachi and other books of the Bible have forced them to this admission. This causes a problem, because the official position of the Church for

²⁴⁷ Ferguson's letter dated 3 Dec. 1979; Tanner & Tanner, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, p. 125-J.

²⁴⁸ William D. Russell, article in *Sunstone*, Sept/Oct, 1982, Vol. 7, No. 5, pg. 25.

²⁴⁹ Russell, *ibid.*, pg. 20.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 26, emphasis added.

²⁵¹ Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, pg. 507.

many years was that the Urim and Thummim which accompanied the golden plates was the exclusive means of translation and that every word of the *Book of Mormon* was divinely translated²⁵².

1. The New Testament portion of the KJV is often quoted in the Old Testament portion of the *Book of Mormon*. Words of Jesus quoted almost without change before Christ's birth in the *Book of Mormon* are as follows: "Ye must pray always, and not faint" (II Nep. 32:9; 14:12/Luke 18:1); "everlasting fire prepared his angels" (Mosiah 26:27; 11:135/Mat. 25:41); "then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God" (Alma 40:25; 19:59/Mat. 13:43)²⁵³.

2. Words of the Apostle Paul are nearly or exactly quoted supposedly long before Paul's birth in the Old Testament portion of the *Book of Mormon*: "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works" (Mosiah 5:15; 3:21/1 Cor. 15:58); "mortal shall put on immortality" (Enos 27:46; 1 Cor. 15:53); "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1:1/Eph. 6:4)²⁵⁴.

3. The books of Hebrews and Revelation are also quoted or closely paraphrased in the Old Testament portion of the *Book of Mormon*: The Spirit is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (II Nep. 2:4; 1:65/Heb. 13:8); believers "endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame" (II Nep. 9:18; 6:42/Heb. 12:2); "if their works have been filthiness they must needs be filthy" (I Nep. 15:33; 4:55/Rev. 22:11)²⁵⁵.

4. Sometimes, the author forgets to change the tense from the past to the future tense when attempting to prophesy about the things to come: "the Lamb of God did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized by water? ... after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him ... he having set the example" (II Nep. 31:5-10; 13:8-11). (Marquardt, pg. 98) In Mosiah 16:6; 8:79, which was supposed to have been written about 148 B.C., such an error is made but then caught later: "now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they have already come"²⁵⁶

5. Old Testament *Book of Mormon* characters were modeled after New Testament persons. Note the following comparison between Alma and Paul:

1) Both tried to "destroy the Church" before their conversions. 2) -were on a "mission of persecution" the day they were converted. 3) In both cases, those "present fell to the earth." 4) In both cases, a voice spoke which others could not understand. 5) Both were asked by the voice why they were fighting against the work of God. 6) -were helpless and "had to be helped by their friends." 7) -fasted as a result. 8) -preached after being converted. 9) -worked with their hands to support their ministries. 10) -healed a crippled man. 11) -"were put into prison." 12) -prayed in prison. 13) -experienced an earthquake while in prison. 14) -In both cases, "the prisoners' bonds were loosed." 15) -Both taught the same doctrines.²⁵⁷

Examples of how the teachings and even the words of Alma and Paul closely resemble each other are as follows:

"faith, hope and charity" (Alma 7:24; 5:41/1 Cor. 13:13), "the power of God unto salvation" (Alma 15:6; 10:95/Rom. 1:16), "without God in the world" (Alma 41:1 1; 19:75/Eph. 2:12), "lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you" (Alma 7:15; 5:26/Heb. 12:1), "it was appointed unto men that they must die; and after death they must come to judgment" (Alma 12:27; 9:46/Heb. 9:27).²⁵⁸

6. While the *Book of Mormon* characters do not pretend to have had the New Testament available during the 400 years after Christ, they often use its words:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (III Nep. 9:18; 4:48/Rev. 21:6; 22:13), "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them" (III Nep. 11:39; 5:41/Mat. 16:18), "Old things are done away, and all things have become new" (III Nep. 12:47; 5:92/II Cor. 5:17), "they had all things common" (III Nep. 26:19; 12:11/Acts 2:44; 4:32).²⁵⁹

²⁵² B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, pg. 177.

²⁵³ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Use Of The Bible In The Book Of Mormon*, 1979: reprint, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, n.d., pg. 96.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pg. 96-97.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pg. 97.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pg. 100.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 102-104.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pg. 105.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 106.

7. Sometimes several different Bible verses manage to get into a single *Book of Mormon* verse. In II Nep. 9:9; 6:21-23, there are no less than four Bible verses from three different books of the Bible interwoven into this one verse of the LDS edition:

“And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil.” (Mat. 25:41), “to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies” (John 8:44), “in misery, like unto himself, yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents” (II Cor. 11:3), “who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).

In II Nep. 9:16; 6:38-40 is another example of this with two verses from Matthew and two from Revelation in one verse of the LDS edition: “And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, and it is his eternal word, which cannot pass away” (Mt. 24:35), “that they who are righteous will be righteous still and they who are filthy shall be filthy still” (Rev. 22:11); “wherefore, they who are filthy are the devils and his angels and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them” (Mat. 24:41) “and their torment is an a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end” (Rev. 14:10-11).

8. The biggest surprises of all, of course, are where Joseph Smith slipped completely, and has his ancient American inhabitants reading the KJV New Testament as follows:

“I would that all men might be saved” (2 Pet. 3:9), “But we read that in the great and last day there are some who will be cast out, yea who shall be cast off from the presence of the Lord” (Mat. 25:30), “Yea, who shall be consigned to a state of endless misery, fulfilling the words which say: They that have done good shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting damnation” (Mt. 25:46), “And thus it is. Amen” (Hel. 12:25-26; 4:72-73).²⁶⁰

“For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb. 13:8), “and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing” (Jas. 1:17/Mor. 9:8-9; 4:67-68).

The plagiarisms in these passages are undeniable.

9. The plates of brass were said to contain all the Scriptures written up to 600 B.C. It is not surprising then that Nephi should quote Moses from the brass plates in I Nep. 22:20; 7:43-45. What is surprising, however, is that he should quote Peter’s paraphrase of Moses taken from the New Testament in Acts 3:22-23 rather than directly from Deut. 18:15, 18-19 in the Old Testament. Peter had not been born yet at that time. This same passage is quoted again in 3 Nep. 20:23-24; 9:60-62, but here includes Peter’s address found in the Book of Acts: “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken.”

This time it is Jesus Christ who claims to be quoting Moses. Obviously, however, he is not quoting Moses, for Samuel lived after Moses. This is a quote from the Book of Acts, which had not yet been written!²⁶¹

Besides its obvious plagiarisms, other serious problems plague the *Book of Mormon*. Those discussed here are grouped into three categories: unannotated changes, un-Biblical doctrines and misinformation about the American Indian’s past.

UNANNOTATED CHANGES

Joseph Smith claimed that the *Book of Mormon* was the most correct book in the world, and that a man could get closer to God by reading it than any other book²⁶². The Mormon Church has had a policy of not annotating its changes in the *Book of Mormon*, thus its people are not generally aware that it has been changing the *Book of Mormon*. In fact, LDS leaders still use this quotation to impress its members with the book’s accuracy.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 111.

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, pg. 107-108.

²⁶² Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church*, Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1978 Vol. 4, pg. 461.

²⁶³ Tanners, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, pg 89

A look at the original 1830 edition will quickly disillusion anyone who believes this. As one critic put it, “the *Book of Mormon*, so far as examined, lets us down to the level of an ignorant, unlettered, unsophisticated youth.”²⁶⁴

While the doctrinal and archaeological errors remain in their totality in present editions, literally hundreds of grammatical errors and misuses of the English language which appear in the original 1830 edition have been edited out.

Examples are: “as I was a journeying” (249; Alma 10:7; 8:10); “Lamanitish servants a going forth” (271; Alma 17:26; 12:38); “a preaching” (284; Alma 21:11; 13:15); “a begging” (309; Alma 30:56; 6:72), etc.²⁶⁵

This has resulted in the publication of another book which compares the original 1830 edition of the *Book of Mormon* with the 1964 LDS edition, noting all the changes. Now, however, the 1981 edition of the *Book of Mormon* has made it obsolete, for it has over two hundred additional changes²⁶⁶.

An example of how the editing still does not go far enough may be found in Helaman 7:8, 9; 3:8-9. The 1830 edition reads, “Yea, if my days could have been in them days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren. But behold, I am consigned that these are my days ...”²⁶⁷ The Mormon editors caught the first error and changed “them” to “these,” but left “consigned,” which should have been changed to “resigned.”

When confronted by the fact that their own leaders have been editing the *Book of Mormon*, Mormons generally try to excuse them by saying that the changes are only superficial. Some of these changes go far beyond grammar. For example, the 1830 *Book of Mormon* tells of translating by King Benjamin which subsequent editions changed from King Benjamin to King Mosiah (Mosiah 21:28). Why this change? Because closer examination of the text shows that King Benjamin had died by then and Mosiah was king.²⁶⁸

Mormons also defend editing by their church leaders on the grounds that they are led by the Holy Spirit in whatever corrections they may make²⁶⁹. However, upon close examination of the changes, it becomes obvious that some of the editing is worse than the original text.

An example of this in the 1830 edition is found in II Nep. 12:8-9. This is a Passage of Isaiah and corresponds to Is. 2:8-9 in the Bible. The primary change in this verse is the addition of the word “not” in verse 9. The 1830 edition added it once, causing confusion²⁷⁰. Subsequent editing, apparently by Joseph Smith himself, added another “not” which compounded the confusion. The result is that this passage, which in Isaiah condemns idolatry, becomes, in the *Book of Mormon*, a command to commit idolatry²⁷¹.

Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. And the mean man boweth not down, and the great man humbleth himself not, therefore, forgive him not.

Samples of other glaring errors which need to be edited are:

Helaman 9:6; 3:73 “Now, immediately when the judge had been murdered-he being stabbed by his brother by a garb of secrecy, and he fled...”²⁷²

Alma 43:38; 20:41 “While on the other hand, there was now and then a man fell among the Nephites, by their swords and the loss of blood, they being shielded from the more vital parts of the body, or the more vital parts of the body being shielded from the strokes of the Lamanites, by their breastplates...”

Mormon General Authority B. H. Roberts wrote wearily about his frustration with *Book of Mormon* errors:²⁷³

²⁶⁴ M.T. Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 59.

²⁶⁵ LaMar Petersen, *Problems In The Mormon Text*, Concord, CA: Pacific Publishing, n.d., pg. 13.

²⁶⁶ Tanner & Tanner, *3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministries, 1981

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pg. 427.

²⁶⁸ Tanner, *ibid.*, Intro., pg. 5.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 87.

²⁷¹ J. Ed Decker, *Saints Alive In Jesus Newsletter*, Issaquah, WA: Ex-Mormons for Jesus, June 1985, n.p.).

²⁷² Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 56.

²⁷³ Tanner, *ibid.*, Intro., pg. 5.

Many errors, verbal and grammatical, have already been eliminated in the late English editions, and there is no valid reason why every one of those that remain should not be eliminated...There is just no good reason why we should not have just as good a Book of Mormon in the English language as they now have in the French, the German, the Swedish and the Danish.. The present writer hopes that he will live to see those verbal and grammatical changes authorized.

Despite Joseph Smith's declaration that the *Book of Mormon* is the most correct book, the *Book of Mormon* actually apologizes for being poorly written, yet practically in the same sentence, brazenly condemns all who refuse to believe it:

... when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words. And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn. (Ether 12:25-26; 5:26-27)

UN-BIBLICAL DOCTRINES

If the *Book of Mormon* is a fraudulent work as this book contends, then doctrinal errors which are in conflict with the Bible should also be evident. This can be clearly demonstrated to the unbiased investigator. Un-Biblical doctrines selected to illustrate this are (1) the corruptibility of the Holy Scriptures, (2) the always-known gospel, (3) salvation by works and (4) the baptism of the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost.

Despite the insistence of the *Book of Mormon* that many parts have been taken away from the Bible (I Nep. 13:26-28; 3:167171), the New Testament makes it very clear that this would never be permitted by God:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till an be fulfilled. (Mt. 5:18)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. 1:23-25)

In the light of these passages, the *Book of Mormon* teaching of the corruptibility of the Holy Scriptures is contrary to the Bible. This is significant for Mormons, for the *Book of Mormon* also teaches that what little remains of the Bible is true (I Nep. 13:40-41; 3:192-197).

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that the gospel has been known by holy men throughout the ages. The New Testament, however, teaches that knowledge of the complete plan of salvation through Christ was a mystery which was not revealed to anyone before it was made known to the apostles after Christ's resurrection:²⁷⁴

...by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; ... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles by the Spirit; (Eph. 3:3-5)

... the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest ... (Rom. 16:25-26)

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:26-27)

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. 3:8-10)

This last Bible passage shows that even the very angels of heaven did not understand the gospel until after it was revealed to the apostles after Christ's resurrection. Since angels were constantly revealing the gospel to the

²⁷⁴ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 149-151.

Nephites in the *Book of Mormon*, this demonstrates conclusively that the entire theological basis of the *Book of Mormon* is un-Biblical.

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that salvation is obtained by both faith and works. Mormons often quote James 2:26: "faith without works is dead" to try to show that the Bible also teaches this and that Paul's teachings on salvation by faith alone is not properly understood by evangelical Christians.

Paul's most concise statement of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone reads "for by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Bible scholars generally agree that the great Pauline doctrine of salvation by faith alone does not disagree with James, which teaches that true saving faith must be accompanied by good works. They are quick to explain, however, that God sees our faith the instant it first appears, while man sees our faith only by seeing our good works, the Bible thus teaches that while we are saved by faith alone, our salvation produces works which are seen by all²⁷⁵.

The author of the *Book of Mormon* could not grasp this, but felt compelled to correct the Pauline concept, even though it was supposedly centuries before it had been revealed to Paul. The *Book of Mormon* "correction" for this is found in II Nep. 25:23; 1 1:44: "... for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." This is a good example of the *Book of Mormon*'s attempt to restore "plain and precious things" to the Bible which end up in distorting the true gospel of Jesus. This is precisely the type of distortion of the gospel that brings to bear the anathemas of the New Testament (Gal. 1:6-9)²⁷⁶.

According to the *Book of Mormon*, people were baptized with the Holy Spirit during Old Testament times, long before the day of Pentecost. The Bible plainly teaches that this could not take place in a general way until after Jesus had been crucified and ascended into heaven:²⁷⁷

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.^{278 279}

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*²⁸⁰

*And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*²⁸¹

The constant recurrence of New Testament-like infillings of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament portion of the *Book of Mormon* shows that the significance of the events on the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts were not understood by the author of the *Book of Mormon*. This is still another example of the un-Biblical doctrines taught in the *Book of Mormon*.

Mormonism is a subjective experience. People who investigate the Church are told that Joseph Smith was a real person who translated real gold plates into the *Book of Mormon*. You can only know that subjectively. You get a "testimony" of it. Then, later, if you discover there were no gold plates and that Joseph Smith stole the idea and plagiarized the words--then you have to say that Joseph operated on a "higher plane". For the emerging Mormon liberal, Joseph judges reality, he is not judged by it!

A Mormon college professor said at the 1985 Sunstone Symposium, that Joseph translated the *Book of Mormon* without looking at the plates--"with his face in a hat containing a seer stone" (which Mormon investigators have known for some time). When someone asked him if he believed there actually were any gold plates, he answered that if Joseph didn't use them, "What the ____ difference does it make?"

²⁷⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961, 21st American Printing, 1934.

²⁷⁶ James M. Tolle, *Is The Book Of Mormon From God?*, San Fernando, CA: Tolle Pub., 1957, pg. 27.

²⁷⁷ Eber D. Howe, *Testimony of Willard Chase, Mormonism Unveiled*, , 1834, page 29.

²⁷⁸ John 7:37-39

²⁷⁹ Howe, *ibid.*, page 29.

²⁸⁰ John 16:7

²⁸¹ Luke 24:49

God was gracious to B. H. Roberts. God let him see his mistake. What his final response was, we do not know for sure.

But in that last conversation with Lloyd, with only two months of life before him, Roberts indicated that he had not yet given up on Joseph Smith. That although the *Book of Mormon* was of human origin, perhaps the Church was still true. Perhaps he could yet establish the divinity of Joseph's call. If the *Book of Mormon* failed him, perhaps he could find divinity in the Doctrine and Covenants!

THE FIVE QUESTIONS ROBERTS COULDN'T ANSWER

1. Linguistics--Ritter's investigator asked why, if the American Indians were all descendants of Lehi, there was such a diversity in the languages of the American Indians and why was there no indication of Hebrew in any of the Indian languages?

2. The *Book of Mormon* says that Lehi found horses when he arrived in America. The horse described in the *Book of Mormon* (as well as many other domestic animals.) did not exist here. It was imported with the Spaniards.

3. Nephi is stated to have had a "bow of steel". Jews did not know steel at time. (And there was no iron smelted on this continent until after the Spaniards arrived).

4. The *Book of Mormon* frequently mentions "swords and cimeters". Cimeters were unknown until the rise of the Moslem faith (after 500 A.D.-ed.).

5. The *Book of Mormon* says the Nephites possessed silk. Silk did not exist in America in pre-Columbian times.

The tragedy of the B. H. Roberts story is that after he became convinced that the *Book of Mormon* was of "human origin," he could not find his way out of Mormonism.

The tragedy of Mormonism is that it is a "subjective" experience. B. H. Roberts concluded that the gold plates "were not objective." That is how one comes to Mormonism--by a subjective experience that is somehow "higher" than reality.

For the Christian, of course, God is higher than His universe, but He is not separate from it. He created it and He created it real. The body Jesus took was real flesh and blood. The body He resurrected was corporeal. His death was actual and His resurrection physical. A real body was pierced by real nails and the resurrected body has real scars. The Apostle Paul tells us if the resurrection is not real, we Christians are fools.

Not so with Mormonism. Gold plates can exist only in the mind, angels can be salamanders and prophecies can have no basis in fact.

The Mormon enters Mormonism in the subjective realm. He convinces himself that Truth is what Salt Lake City articulates today. If today's prophet speaks a word from God backwards from what Brigham Young said--so what! Objective proof can never, by itself, shake the Mormon testimony. Joseph Smith can be shown to be a liar, the *Book of Mormon* can be shown to be a fraud and yet Mormons cling to their "experience."

It is this "Catch 22" that makes dealing with Mormons so frustrating. Of course, the "Catch 22" is spiritual. Now, I don't want to get too weird with you, but you are never going to deal effectively with Mormonism unless you realize that people caught in its web need more than logic. They need deliverance from the stranglehold of Satan. The children of Israel could not come into the Promised Land until they came out of Egypt.

B. H. Roberts lost faith in the *Book of Mormon*. He then set about to see if the *Doctrine & Covenants* was divine. But he didn't have enough time. When would it have ended? How much of Mormonism would have had to be destroyed before he could have found his way out?

Mormonism is a spiritual problem that requires a spiritual solution. After Mormons are presented with a degree of truth, they are responsible for their response. Christians are called to be witnesses--witnesses that move with grace and patience. God brings the increase. He will do this so that you "will not become weary in well-doing." So that you will continue to stand in faith, graciously proclaiming liberty to the captives. And so that you will see that combating Mormonism is not mainly intellectual, but spiritual.

MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE AMERICAN INDIANS' PAST

The application of scientific investigation methods to the question of the history and origin of the American Indian did not begin until the latter part of the 19th Century. This should be of special interest to the LDS Church, for logically this should prove that Joseph Smith was a true prophet. The LDS Church has not welcomed the new discoveries, however, for instead, they show that he was a false prophet rather than a true one²⁸².

Even today, Mormon missionaries cite as evidence outmoded ideas which are nearly 200 years out of date²⁸³. When pressed to present modern evidence, they immediately turn from objective evidence to the subjective method of simply "asking God" if the *Book of Mormon* is true. They are taught that this is a surer way of confirming spiritual truth than testing it by objective investigation. This is especially surprising in the light of their emphasis on education and their dictum, "The Glory of God is Intelligence."

The results of scientific inquiry may be divided into four categories: (1) racial, (2) linguistic, (3) cultural, and (4) religious. Scientists have determined that the American Indian has the physical characteristics of the Asian Mongolians. They believe that between 25,000 and 30,000 years ago, there was a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska over which Asian tribes migrated following the animals which they hunted for food²⁸⁴.

Five different linguistic stocks form the basis for all the languages of the American Indians. Each of these stocks are as completely unrelated as English and Hebrew, for example²⁸⁵.

These form the base for 169 related languages that are still as unintelligible as, say, English and German. Then these major languages are broken down into numerous dialects which are can be used with a certain amount of mutual understanding between them. None of the language stocks are related to any existing Old World languages²⁸⁶.

As far back as 9,000 B.C., bone was the material used for cutting. Identical bone pins and awls have been found in Indiana, Missouri and Kentucky, showing that trade was widespread by 5000 B.C.²⁸⁷

As early as 4,000 B.C., the Indians in America learned that by heating chert, it became hardened enough to provide a sharp cutting edge. While gold, silver and copper were used to make ornaments, the use of other metals was nearly unknown before Columbus. The highest level of civilization achieved in the Americas was the "polished stone" age²⁸⁸.

The bow and arrow came into use only about AD 800. This was very easy for archaeologists to confirm, because spear heads are 2-4 inches long, while the arrowheads are one-to-two inches long²⁸⁹. Before that, the principal hunting weapon was the lance thrown with an "atlatl" to give it added thrust.

In North America, the inhabitants were nomadic, living off the abundant wildlife. Evidence shows that about AD 800, agriculture began in earnest as the population increased. Interestingly enough, tribal wars did not begin to any real degree until then. Apparently the investment of work in the land gave the feeling of proprietorship, and aroused feelings of competition between the different tribes²⁹⁰.

²⁸² Wesley P. Walters, *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol III, No. 3, pg. 4.

²⁸³ John W. Rich, compiler, *The Book Of Mormon On Trial*, Salt Lake City: Sounds of Zion, 1971, pg. 169-245.

²⁸⁴ Wally Tope, *On The Frontlines Witnessing To Mormons*, Caffada: Flintridge, CA: Wally Tope Frontlines Ministries, 1984, pg. 65.

²⁸⁵ B.H. Roberts, *ibid.*, pg. 31-33.

²⁸⁶ Wesley, *ibid.*, pg. 4.

²⁸⁷ Stuart Struever and Felicia Antonelli Holton, *Koster-Americans In Search Of Their Prehistoric Past*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979 pg. 192.

²⁸⁸ Struever, *ibid.*, pg. 189-192.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 163.

While different civilizations did rise and fall in Pre-Columbian, only the Mayas in Yucatan developed a written language²⁹¹. Thousands of their inscriptions are found on ancient temples and buildings, most notably in the ancient cities of Copan and Palenque²⁹².

Especially in Central America, the Indians showed themselves to be notable astronomers. The Mayas divided the year into eighteen months of twenty days each. Five days were added at the end of the year, and a sixth day each four years²⁹³. In other areas, however, the Indians were notably behind some other parts of the world. The sail and the rudder, for example were unknown to them²⁹⁴. Also, the dog was their only domestic animal²⁹⁵.

The unbroken record of Indian religions is of a paganism which included idol worship, cannibalism and human sacrifice. Its animism and belief in witchcraft is well documented. No evidence exists indicating that this religion was ever changed or interrupted.”²⁹⁶

When comparing these findings with the *Book of Mormon*, the great gulf between them immediately becomes apparent. The *Book of Mormon* presents three migrations to the Americas, all from the Middle East²⁹⁷. The first was shortly before the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel (Ether 2:5; 1:26), and there were no other immigrations until 600 B.C. The second and third were shortly after 600.B.C. Both of these latter migrations were composed of Israelites. One of them, the Mulekites, found one lone survivor of the previous inhabitants. Other than that, all three migrations found the Americas empty of inhabitants (2 Nep. 1:9-11; 1:19-24)²⁹⁸.

Scientific findings agree, however, that the Americas have been inhabited without any sign of annihilations for at least 25,000 years²⁹⁹. Evidence that a white race inhabited Pre-Columbian America is nonexistent (ibid.). Furthermore, the body structure of the Indians is different than that of the Jewish race³⁰⁰.

The fact that there are five language stocks would seem to indicate at least five migrations to the Americas after the Tower of Babel. An ancient date for these would be necessary to explain the hundreds of kindred languages that have been formed from them³⁰¹. The *Book of Mormon* does not record any other migrations to America that would account for them.

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that both the white and the dark races inhabiting the Americas spoke and wrote a mutually intelligible language based on Hebrew as late as AD 400, and also that the knowledge of Egyptian writing was current, though it had been reformed (Mor. 9:32; 4:98-99). This militates against archaeological findings which state that neither Hebrew nor Egyptian writings existed in ancient America³⁰².

The only script that existed in ancient America, the Mayan script in Yucatan, bears absolutely no resemblance to the letters copied from the golden plates by Joseph Smith³⁰³.

The *Book of Mormon* states that the inhabitants of ancient America had iron and steel tools and weapons (II Nep. 5:15;4:21), linen and silk clothes (Alma 1:29; 1:44), and nearly every kind of domesticated animal which we have today (I Nep. 18:25; 5:216; 2 Nep. 17:21; 9:34; 3 Nep. 7:8; 3:43). It even states that the ox was found in America in AD 600 in a wild state (I Nep. 18:25; 104. 5:216-217). Not only is there no evidence of the former, but the affirmation of the latter should definitely make the whole matter suspect, for the ox is a product of human surgical intervention nearly 100% of the time³⁰⁴. The animals mentioned as domesticated in the *Book of Mormon* were

²⁹¹ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 272.

²⁹² *ibid.*, pg. 260-269.

²⁹³ *ibid.*, pg. 294.

²⁹⁴ Walters, *ibid.*, *ibid.*, pg. 6.

²⁹⁵ Tope, *ibid.*, pg. 65.

²⁹⁶ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 285-288.

²⁹⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 98

²⁹⁸ Walters, *ibid.*, pg. 3.

²⁹⁹ Tope, *ibid.*, pg. 65.

³⁰⁰ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 294.

³⁰¹ Roberts, *ibid.*, pg. 77-78.

³⁰² Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Archaeology And The Book Of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1969, pg. 2.

³⁰³ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 265.

³⁰⁴ Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, page 35.

unknown in Pre-Columbian America, as were some of the grains it mentions, such as barley and wheat (Mosiah 7:22; 5:35; 9:9; 6:12)³⁰⁵.

Also, the *Book of Mormon* week was of seven days following the Jewish pattern³⁰⁶.

Mormons understand the Aztec legends of Quetzalcoatl to be an echo of Christ's visit to the Americas after his resurrection. Scientists have determined, however, that Quetzalcoatl's visit was about AD 1,000³⁰⁷.

The very fact that he was remembered as a bearded white man would seem to indicate that the Indians were not white at that time³⁰⁸. No evidence at all exists which would indicate the existence of a Christian civilization in the Americas previous to the arrival of Columbus³⁰⁹.

During the summer of 1985, writer, Dick Baer, visited the archaeological center in Kampsville, Illinois. One of the archaeologists was a part-Cherokee Indian named John White. He affirmed to Baer that he had read the *Book of Mormon* and that the results of the diggings there in no way resembled ancient Indian life as described in it. This coincides with what Ross T. Christensen, a Mormon anthropologist at Brigham Young University, has admitted: "The statement that the *Book of Mormon* has already been proved by archeology is misleading."³¹⁰

THE GOOD GUYS ARE WHITE AND THE BAD GUYS ARE BLACK

"And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, because of their iniquity ... wherefore, as they were white and exceeding fair and delightful, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." (2 Nephi 5:21) Is the American Indian's "dark" skin a curse? "And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers..." (Alma 3:6). What was the "practical" reason God cursed the Lamanites? "...Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever, except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them. And again: I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed also" (Alma 3:14-15). How can the Indians or "Lamanites" shake this curse? "Therefore, all the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord did unite with their brethren, the Nephites And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites: And their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white unto the Nephites;" (III Nephi 2:12, 14-15). My, isn't this a wonderful "doctrine"?

THE "APOSTLES" BELIEF

Imagine, if you can, the full impact on a "Believing" Indian or Lamanite who happened to hear then "Apostle" Spencer Kimball (who became the twelfth "Prophet" of the Church) actually saying to a General Conference of the LDS Church: "I saw a striking contrast in the progress of the Indian people today... they are fast becoming a white and delightful people... For years they have been growing delightful, and they are now becoming white and delightful, as they were promised... The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservations. At one meeting a father and mother and their sixteen-year old daughter were present, the little member girl sixteen sitting between the dark father and mother, and it was evident she was several shades lighter than her parents.... These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and delightfulness."³¹¹

SENSITIVITY AWARD

And for the very next sentence in the above speech, we nominate then "Apostle" Kimball for the "Sensitive Christian of the Year" Award. Added Kimball: "One white elder jokingly said that he and his companion were

³⁰⁵ Tope, *ibid.*, pg. 64-65.

³⁰⁶ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 294.

³⁰⁷ Walters, *ibid.*, pg. 22.

³⁰⁸ Lamb, *ibid.*, pg. 295.

³⁰⁹ Walters, *ibid.*, pg. 6-7.

³¹⁰ Tanner, *Shadow*, pg. 98.

³¹¹ *Improvement Era*, December 1960, p. 922-23.

donating blood regularly to the hospital in the hope that the process might be accelerated.”³¹² My, my! Thank God for the “white” elders, contributions, even if it was a “joke.” The Indians must really feel indebted to them. Isn’t it too bad that everyone isn’t “white and delightsome,” like all of the Mormon Apostles and Prophets have been (and, incidentally, still are).

LATTER-DAY LAMANITE CURSE

The poor unfortunate Lamanites were constantly evolving from “white and delightsome” to “dark and cursed, based on their obedience to the Mormon God. The prophets that followed were no less harsh in their judgments of non-whites. Since the “promised land” didn’t exactly overflow with blacks, some explanation had to be made for those that didn’t fit the mold of the *Book of Mormon* Lamanite. It would take over a hundred years and an enlightened prophet to allow blacks into the priesthood. Of course, it took that long for the Mormon god to become sufficiently enlightened as to send forth a revelation.

*“You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind.”*³¹³

*Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.*³¹⁴

*Not only was Cain called upon to suffer, but because of his wickedness, he became the father of an inferior race. A curse was placed upon him and that curse has been continued through his lineage and must do so while time endures. Millions of souls have come into this world cursed with a black skin and have been denied the privilege of Priesthood and the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel.*³¹⁵

If a person is not convinced of the fraudulent nature of the *Book of Mormon* by the internal textual evidence, then the scientific refutations should suffice. The *Book of Mormon*, when examined closely, turns out to be full of plagiarisms, unannotated changes, un-Biblical doctrines and misinformation about the American Indian’s past. It cannot be the Word of God.

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JOSEPH’S IMAGINATION

The evening recitals which Joseph enjoyed with his family during his youth could come from no other source than the vivid, constructive imagination of Joseph Smith, a remarkable power which attended him through all his life. It was as strong and varied as Shakespeare’s and no more to be accounted for than the English Bard’s.”³¹⁶ What about “Internal Evidence” in the *Book of Mormon*? Does that give us any clues? Clearly, Joseph made some mistakes, in spite of his imagination. Roberts discusses some of them, including that there was only three days journey for Lehi’s party from Jerusalem to the Red Sea (I Nephi 2:4-6) which is a distance of, at minimum, 170 miles. With women and children and, supplies along? Or how did the Jaredites manage their flocks and herds and fowl, etc. while journeying for 344 days in their air tight barges (Ether 6:4-12), or Nephi building a temple like unto Solomon’s with not more than one hundred persons, while teaching the people how to build with wood and iron and copper and brass and steel and gold and silver and precious ores which were in great abundance (II Nephi 5:15-16) while it took Solomon seven years and over 150,000 workmen to accomplish the same feat. Roberts comments on the battles of the *Book of Mormon* where 2,000 “striplings” fought wars over a thirteen year period without one being killed, (Alma 56-58) Roberts feels that it is kind of natural for thinking people to ask, “Do we have here a

³¹² *ibid.*

³¹³ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 7, page 290.

³¹⁴ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 10, page 110.

³¹⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way To Perfection*, page 102.

³¹⁶ Part I, XIV, 3.

great historical document, or only a wonder tale, told by an undeveloped mind, living in a period and in an environment where the miraculous in 'history' is accepted without limitations ... ?"³¹⁷ Roberts makes many other comparisons of scenes, plots and people in the *Book of Mormon* that are similar to literature contemporary with Joseph Smith's day.

LDS REACTION

What was the result of the Mormon Church's members when they read Mr. Roberts manuscript? Well, not too surprising, members of the Mormon Church don't even know about the manuscript, with the exception of a few. You would not be able to get a copy of it from the Mormon Church. Currently, the Church says that Roberts really didn't have any questions in his own mind about the *Book of Mormon*. What about the manuscript, then? Oh, they say, it was prepared only, for the Twelve Apostles so that they might be aware of possible questions enemies of the Church might bring up. Roberts also prepared another 141 page manuscript titled *Book of Mormon Difficulties*. Space precludes much discussion of this document other than to comment that there are very serious problems with linguistics in the *Book of Mormon* (there just has not been enough time since the Jaredites and Nephites came to the New World for their language to have degenerated into the present languages and dialects: serious problems with the *Book of Mormon* referring to navigation (Mormon 5:18) and steel since archaeologists can find no evidence of either in the Americas during *Book of Mormon* times; serious problems with a "civilized, pre-Indian population" and Roberts asks:

*Can we successfully overturn the evidences presented by archaeologists for the great antiquity of man in America, and his continuous occupancy of it, and the fact of his stone age culture, not an iron and steel culture? Can we successfully maintain the Book of Mormon's comparatively recent advent of man in America and the existence of his ore and steel and domestic animal, and written language stage of culture against the deductions of our late American writer's upon these themes? The recent accepted authoritative writers leave us, so far as I can at present see, no ground of appeal or defense-the new knowledge seems against us.*³¹⁸

He presented this study to the Twelve Apostles with this conclusion "...in the meantime there may have occurred to your enlightened minds a solution to all these problems, that will cause all of our difficulties to disappear. Most humbly I pray it may be so..."

DEVASTATION PROBLEMS

During Christ's crucifixion in the Old World pure havoc was supposed to have taken place in the New World. Specifically, the *Book of Mormon* tells us: "And there was a great and terrible destruction in the land northward, for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of...the exceeding great quaking of the whole earth ... and the highways were broken up ... And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned.. And there were some cities which remained; but the damage thereof was exceeding great And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of...the quaking of the earth" (III Nephi 8:10-17). The problem? Why has no evidence been found in the cities of Central America that such tragedies occurred approximately AD 34 as described in the *Book of Mormon*? In trying to answer why there is no geographic and archaeological evidence for the *Book of Mormon* one disappointed believer wrote: "One way out of the dilemma is to say that everything was scrambled and lost because of the upheavals described in III Nephi for the time of the crucifixion. In my personal opinion, this is not a satisfactory escape hatch. Virtually all of the data in the *Book of Mormon* must be credited to Mormon and his abridgment of the 'larger plates.' He and Moroni writing in the 4th century (over 300 years after the crucifixion), were responsible for the last 400 pages of the text. And it is in those 400 pages that most of the geographical data appear. Mormon doesn't say that his references to geography are useless and hopeless. Further, innumerable excavations made in the area we are dealing with, and in the time span (3000 B.C.-400 AD) with which we are involved, reveal great undisturbed ancient strata, etc., etc.... right through the time of the crucifixion. I don't have the answer to the dilemma..."³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Part II, I, 14.

³¹⁸ *Book of Mormon Difficulties*, III, 47-48.

³¹⁹ *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, p. 125-J.

More problems with the *Book of Mormon* were noted by other scholars. One such study was made by Dr. Thomas D.S. Key, an educator who hold three doctorate degrees. In his study, "A Biologist Examines the *Book of Mormon*," he makes many interesting observations.

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

I Nephi 1:2 and Mosiah 1:4 assert that the native language of the Hebrews between 600 B.C. and 91 B.C. was Egyptian. Mormon 9:32 differs in saying that it was Reformed Egyptian around 400 AD. However, it is well established that in 600 B.C. the Hebrews spoke Hebrew. As a result of the Babylonian captivity (560 B.C.-538 B.C.), Hebrew was reduced to the language of the scribes, priests, and rabbis. Aramaic became the language of the Hebrews. Then in 70 AD Titus forced the Hebrews out of Palestine, and they acquired the languages of the nations to which they were scattered. The Hebrews had not spoken Egyptian since Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt many centuries earlier.

The *Book of Mormon* peoples that numbered in the millions (Ether 15:2), kept their records on plates (Ether 1:2-3,6 and 13:13-14). The Nephites were forever engraving on records (I Nephi 19:1-5/589 B.C. and Jacob 1:2-3/544 B.C.) and Jarom 1:1 4-15/420 B.C.) and Omni 1:30 and Alma 37:1-2/73 B.C.) and Helaman 3:13-15/46 B.C. and Mormon 1:14/322 AD) The language of the Nephites was a kind of reformed Egyptian consisting "of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians." (I Nephi 1:2) The Problem? With all the exploration going on no one can find any records on gold plates in Central America. And as important

*No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones...*³²⁰

In consulting with professors of Semitic languages at the University of California and elsewhere I could find no evidence of the existence of "Reformed Egyptian," nor for the claim that the following words are Egyptian or Semitic at all: Shazer (I Nephi 16:13, 14), Irreantum (I Nephi 17:5), deseret (for "bee" in Ether 2:3), Liahona (Alma 37:38), or the numerous names that are unique to the *Book of Mormon*.

GEOGRAPHICAL PROBLEMS

II Nephi 5:15,16 is self-contradictory about the presence of minerals. I Nephi 17:5 is an interesting description of Arabia which is "called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey." Arabia is bountiful in sunshine, petroleum, sand, heat, and fresh air, but certainly not in "much fruit and also wild honey," nor has it been since Pleistocene times.

I Nephi 18:1 indicates that the Jews made a ship from the ample timber of Arabia. The same objection above applies here also.

I Nephi 2:6-9 speaks of an abundant Arabian river named Laman that flows continually into the Red Sea! There has been no river whatever in Arabia since the Pleistocene era.

I Nephi 17:26-27 speaks of the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptians. Any good Bible dictionary will point out that the KJV translators did not know their geography. The Israelites crossed the Reed or Marsh Sea, not the Red Sea. Yet, Mormons insist that while the Bible may have errors of translation, there are no such errors of translation for the *Book of Mormon*.

Amazingly, the numerous and detailed descriptions of North America cannot be correlated with any distinct geographic features such as the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Rockies, Niagara Falls, Appalachians, or any rivers.

In all the archaeological discoveries in the Americas, not a single one of the 38 major cities in the *Book of Mormon* has been found.

BOTANICAL PROBLEMS

³²⁰ Smithsonian Institution.

According to the *Book of Mormon*, God led Nephi and other faithful Jews to leave the “land of Jerusalem” (sic) to go to the Promised Land of North America. The group brought their “seeds” with them (I Nephi 18:6) and planted them in the New World.

We are faced at once with some serious botanical problems, for in I Nephi 18:24 (591 B.C.) we read that upon arrival the Jews planted the numerous seeds that they had brought, and that the seeds “did grow exceedingly, wherefore, we were blessed in abundance.” As is well known, the dominant crops of the Near East were grapes, olives, wheat, barley, figs, dates, flax, onions, leeks, garlic, certain kinds of beans, pomegranates, and sycamore figs, certain melons, various oranges, lemons, and peaches. Crops from the Americas such as potatoes, tobacco, blueberries, cranberries, eggplants, and maize (or what we Americans call “corn”), were unknown in the Old World until modern times.

There is no evidence whatever that the Near Eastern crops ever “did grow exceedingly ... in abundance” until modern Europeans brought them to the Americas. Admittedly, while modern European colonists did find grapes in the Americas, they are distinct from the Old World species.

Plant grafting is mentioned in I Nephi 15:16 and Jacob 5, yet there is no evidence that Indians practiced this in 600 B.C. to 421 AD. Pruning is mentioned in II Nephi 15:6, and faces a similar problem. To describe seed and plant growth as “swelling” (Alma 32:28-34 and 33:23) is naive and grossly inaccurate. It reflects the error of preformationism.

Other botanical problems are encountered when III Nephi 18:18 speaks of wheat in the Americas in 34 AD. I Nephi 13:7, Alma 1:29 and 4:6, Helaman 6:13, and Ether 10:24 speak of linen (cloth made from flax). Barley is mentioned in Mosiah 9:9; figs in III Nephi 14:16, and olives in Jacob 5, I Nephi 17:14, 15:7, 12, 16. None of these existed here at that time. “Neas” and “sheum” are mentioned in Mosiah 9:9 as two food plants that were prominent, and grew in abundance. Yet, if they were so prominent and important, why are there no references to them in Old World literature, and why have they not survived?

ZOOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Although no evidence has been found that the peoples of the *Book of Mormon* period of time had domesticated animals (except the dog) we read “we did find .. the cow and the ox, and the ass, and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat...” (I Nephi 18:25). Contrary to what I Nephi 18:25 asserts, North America had no cows, oxen, asses, horses, or goats “for the use of man” between 600 B.C. and the time European colonists brought them.

II Nephi 21:6-8 plagiarize the KJV of Isaiah 11:6-8, and applies it to North America. (See also II Nephi 30:12-14.) But, North America had no sheep, lions, leopards, or the two snakes (asps and cockatrices) at that time. Ether 2:2-3 and 5:4 explain that Jared and his family captured the birds, fish, and bees, and gathered seeds with which they populated North America. But American birds and fish are distinctly different from Old World species. Honey bees were first introduced by Europeans. Ether 6:1 claims that Jared and his small family kept alive for 344 days in the aquaria all of the species of fish that now inhabit the Americas.

Ether 9:18 and 19 contains several problems. First, it lists domestic cattle, oxen, and cows as separate species! Second, these did not exist in the Americas at that time. Third, domestic swine did not exist here then. Fourth, Jews would certainly not relish swine as “useful to man!” Fifth, horses, asses, and elephants did not exist in the Americas at that time. Prehistoric forms became extinct much earlier, and were not “useful to man.” Sixth, “cureloms” and “cumoms” are not identified by Mormon scholars. Yet, it would be most unlikely for such supposedly useful and common domestic animals to go extinct. Seventh, archaeologists can find no evidence of any of these animals being used by the New World peoples of 2000 B.C. to 400 AD. The horse was introduced by the Spanish a thousand years later.

There are some serious problems in the description of the behavior related to poisonous snakes, etc. in Ether 9:30-34. First, the notion that snakes increase as a drought increases is contradicted by the fact that reptiles are particularly sensitive to heat and lack of water, and would die off faster than other animals. Second, even with the large population of modern North America, only about twenty people die yearly by snake bite. It is certainly not realistic for Ether to claim that numerous people and animals were exterminated by snakes. Third, it is totally unlike sheep for all of them in the country to flee in one direction. Fourth, it would not be realistic for the sheep to be driven to the south by poisonous snakes as there are much fewer snakes in the north. Fifth, snakes never cooperate with each other in driving animals in any direction. Sixth, it would be impossible for people to have eaten in such

few days the countless animals that had been killed by the snakes. Seventh, it is forbidden to Jews to eat animals that have died like that. Eighth, Ether 10:21, etc. tells us that the land was densely covered with people, while Ether 10:19 says that “the land was covered with animals of the forests.” Ether 10:12 speaks of raising much grain. All of this simply does not square with the idea of an epidemic of poisonous snakes. People, farming, and numerous predatory animals will not allow snakes to become numerous.

Satyrs (II Nephi 23:21) and dragons (II Nephi 23:22; 8:9; and 23:22) are mentioned as literal creatures, not figurative. Chickens (III Nephi 10:4-6), and dogs (Alma 16:10, Mosiah 12:2, and III Nephi 7:8) were nonexistent here at that time. In III Nephi 20:16 and 21:12 lions are described as “beasts of the forests.” Contrary to popular opinion and the *Book of Mormon*, lions do not live in forests or jungles. They live in savannahs (few scattered trees). And, lions never inhabited the Americas.

Silk is erroneously mentioned as being produced in the Americas at that time (I Nephi 13:7; Alma 4:6; and Ether 9:17 and 10:24). But, silkworm moths had not yet been introduced from Asia. Clothes moths are mentioned in III Nephi 13:19, 20 and 27:32, yet there were no woolen garments for moths to attack as sheep had not yet been introduced. Needless to say, clothes moths had not yet been introduced to North America.

II Nephi 17:15 lists two foods at that time, butter and honey. But Indians had no milk animals or honey bees. Candles are made either of bees’ wax, beef tallow, or paraffin so that a reference to candles in III Nephi 8:21 is unacceptable.

MICROBIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Alma 46:40 specifically attributes “the cause of disease to ... the nature of the climate,” instead of to filth, poor diet, or microorganisms. Alma 16:1 tells us that the stench of those killed in one battle was so strong that “the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years,” “and their lands remained desolate.” Action of bacteria, fungi, worms, insects, vultures, etc. would require no more than a few weeks at very most to dispose of these carcasses and their odors not “many years”! III Nephi 17:7 mentions leprosy in 34 AD, yet the first known case in the Americas was in 1758.

PHYSIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Ether 15:30-31 says that the beheaded Shiz raised up and struggled for breath. An amazing constitution or a physiological freak?

Ether 14:2 specifically says that “every man kept the hilt of the sword in his right hand,” and yet a distinct minority of Jews and Indians are left-handed. Alma 57:25 asserts that all in an army of 2,060 received many wounds, yet none died.

The implied reproduction rate in the *Book of Mormon* is astronomical. The story starts in 600 B.C. and extends to 421 AD. It involves a mere handful of people who supposedly travel from “the land of Jerusalem” (sic) to the Promised Land of America. Every four or five years or so there are devastating wars that kill many thousands of people (Alma 28:2, etc.), or as Ether 15:2, says, “nearly two millions of mighty men” in addition to their wives and children. For this to be so it would be necessary for each couple to have scores of children, and for them to reach maturity in three or so years throughout the supposed period between 600 B.C. and 421 AD.

The description of the resurrection body in Alma 40:23 is astounding to say the least. It says that nothing shall be lost, not even a hair. In light of the fact that we shed a few score body and head hairs every week, and we “de-commission” countless blood, skin, and other cells weekly it is unrealistic to assert that all of these lost parts will be returned to us.

The Jaredites crossed the oceans from the Old World to the New World in small water tight barges (Ether 2:16-17) which had no windows and in fact were air tight (Ether 2:19). With the flocks and herds doing what animals do best in confined space, the pilgrims achieved no small miracle before the advent of the gas mask.

It took 344 days (Ether 6:11) for the eight vessels (Ether 3:1) to make the trip complete with their herds and flocks (Ether 6:4) which included all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats and horses and asses and elephants and cureloms and cumoms. (Ether 9:17-19). Scientists might pause in wonderment

at the quality of life in these sealed vessels, with a bewildering assortment of life constantly consuming the available oxygen while creating an unbelievable stench in the process.

PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROBLEMS

Ether 2:20 says that the Lord instructed Jared to make a hole in the top and one “in the bottom” of each barge! What was the hole “in the bottom” for? To let water and wastes out? Could it be possible that most of the voyagers were put to work bailing water? Ether 2:23 explains that if windows were put in the barges, the barges would “...be dashed to pieces (sic);.....”

In describing Christ’s crucifixion III Nephi 8:20-23 says that the darkness was so great for three days (sic) that the candles and torches could not give off light! Why not?

Alma 24:16 speaks of burying swords in the earth to keep them bright. On the contrary this would speed their rusting.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

It is erroneous for a book supposedly written in North America at that time to mention bellows (I Nephi 17:11), fine steel bow (I Nephi 16:1 8), swords (II Nephi 1:18, etc.) scimitars (Alma 2:12), sackcloth (II Nephi 13:24), carts (II Nephi 15:18, 28), chariots (Alma 18:12; 20:6; III Nephi 21:14), numerous large buildings (Ether 10:5, etc.) many highways (Helaman 14:24), cement (Helaman 3:7, 9, 11), forts (Alma 48:8, 9; 51:27; etc.), javelin (Alma 51:34), bushel (III Nephi 12:15), breastplates (Mosiah 8:10 and Alma 46:13), headplate and armor for the loins (Alma 46:13), compass (Alma 37:38,44, etc.), spindles and spinning (Alma 37:40; Helaman 6:13), sickles (Alma 26:5), yoke (I Nephi 13:5), strong cords (Alma 26:29), trumpet (III Nephi 13:2), street corners (III Nephi 13:5), chains (II Nephi 1:13; 28:19; etc.), hoe (Ether 10:25), harp (II Nephi 15:12), viol (II Nephi 15:12), tabret (II Nephi 15:12), plow (Ether 10:25), fuller’s soap (III Nephi 24:2), barns (III Nephi 13:26), and candles (III Nephi 8:21).

These Jaredites were fashioning steel (Ether 7:9) when archaeologists find that smelting and casting was not known until about 800 AD (See also II Nephi 5:15.)

Unless the pilgrims had motorized vehicles they would have achieved the impossible in high-speed travel. Lehi along with women and children and supplies travels 170 miles from Jerusalem to the Red Sea IN THREE DAYS (I Nephi 2:4-6).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The *Book of Mormon* tells of three migrations, the Nephites in 589 B.C. (I Nephi 18:23); the Mulekites in 589 B.C. (Omni 15:16) and the Jaredites during the time of the Tower of Babel (Ether 1:33). All of these migrations came from the land of Palestine designating the new inhabitants to this promised land (I Nephi 17:14) as Hebrews. The Problem? Scientists universally agree that the original inhabitants of the New World are of Mongoloid origin related to the people of Asia³²¹.

The *Book of Mormon* was supposedly written during the period in question, but there is no evidence that Indians had anything other than simple pictorial writing at that time. They wrote no books. It is not appropriate to find references to many official records (Helaman 3:15), jot and tittle (III Nephi 12:18), scroll (Mormon 5:23, 9:2), and Alpha and Omega (III Nephi 9:18).

Other cultural problems include references to mammon (III Nephi 13:24), lawyers and judges (Alma 10: 14-15; and III Nephi 6:1), acre (II Nephi 15:10), “south-southeast direction” (I Nephi 16:13), synagogues (III Nephi 24:2), Gentiles (I Nephi 13:19), rending of clothes, wearing sackcloth, salt trodden under foot, etc.

The *Book of Mormon* consistently and frequently refers to the “heart” in the sense of soul, yet Indians varied in their terminology from lungs, kidneys, liver, intestines, to heart.

³²¹ *Smithsonian Institution Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon*, Summer 1982.

II Nephi 26:33 divides humanity into “black and white” and “Jew and Gentile”-most unrealistic for the Americas at that time.

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that Indians originated from Jewish settlers in the Americas that wandered away from the Lord. I Nephi 12:11 says that as the Jews wandered away in unbelief, “they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people.” I Nephi 13:15 praises future Americans as being “white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain.” But Palestinian Jews did not have pale skin like the British. II Nephi 5:21, Jacob 3:3-9, and Mormon 5:15-17 say that God cursed the Indians with a dark skin. II Nephi 5:23 and Alma 3:6-10 say that anyone who marries an Indian “shall be cursed with the same cursing.” If this were true, why do people who are only part Indian not look full Indian?

II Nephi 30:5-7 (pre-1981 edition) predicts that when Indians accept the Mormon Gospel, that they will again become “a *white* and delightsome people.” In order to counter any possible arguments against logic, the 1981 edition was edited, changing the wording to “a *pure* and delightsome people.”

III Nephi 2:15 gives supposed examples of this. II Nephi 13:24 says that punishment from sin shall include “instead of well set hair, baldness,” yet baldness is much more common among Caucasians. And far from being a curse, biblically, Elisha was a bald-headed prophet that pronounced a curse, instead, on those that made fun of his lack of hair. (II Kings 2:23-24)

Instead of Semitic origin, Indians are distinctly Mongoloid, having straight and black hair, brown eyes, high cheekbones, skin pigmentation, occasional Mongoloid blue spot, certain blood traits, etc. Dark skin, instead of being a curse, is a protection against skin cancer. And, Indians are not innately more filthy, loathsome, or ugly than any other people.

PENTATEUCH PROBLEMS

Lehi’s party left with the Brass Plates of Laban (I Nephi 3:3,12 and I Nephi 5:10-22) which contained, in essence, the Old Testament from the Five Books of Moses (verse 11) including all the prophets to the reign of Zedekiah (verse 13) whose reign was 597-587 B.C. The Problem? There is no mention of “The Record of the Jews” (see I Nephi 3:3) in the Bible and it was almost certain that some hundreds of years passed following the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem before the Old Testament composed of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, was accepted as canonical. This form of “plate writing” was not in use in that day. There has never been another brass plate like Laban’s found anywhere in the Holy Land! or the whole world!

CHRISTIANITY PROBLEMS

The *Book of Mormon* reports that Christ visited the New World following his resurrection (III Nephi 11:8-10), established his Church there (III Nephi 12:1), and his followers practiced Christianity for three hundred years (Mormon 3:2). Yet there is no evidence of Christianity in the Americas before 1492 and Columbus’ visit.

OTHER PROBLEMS

In 385 AD close to a half million casualties fell with all manner of weapons of war, in the last Great Battle, on the tiny Hill Cumorah. Yet not even a single item of evidence has ever been found.

Numerous historical and archaeological problems exist. The first editions of the *Book of Mormon* contained numerous grammatical and spelling errors. There are many contradictions between the *Book of Mormon* and other Mormon writings. And, the *Book of Mormon* contradicts the Bible in many places. Lack of space prohibits a listing of examples of the above problems.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this paper³²² will help my Mormon friends and other seekers after truth for as Moroni 10:4 well says,

³²² *Journal of The American Scientific Affiliation*, XXX-VII, 2, June 1985.

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

NO HELP FROM THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Due to the recurring claims of some Mormon missionaries that scientists use the *Book of Mormon* in their archaeological investigations, the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C., periodically puts out a letter clarifying its position. In one such letter dated "Summer 1979," they state clearly:

"The Smithsonian Institution has never used the *Book of Mormon* in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book."³²³

The document, in its entirety, reads:

Information from the National Museum of Natural History SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

Your recent inquiry concerning the *Book of Mormon* has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The *Book of Mormon* is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution does not use it in archaeological research. Because the Smithsonian Institution receives many inquiries regarding the *Book of Mormon*, we have prepared a "Statement Regarding the *Book of Mormon*," a copy of which is enclosed for your information. This statement includes answers to questions most commonly asked about the *Book of Mormon*.

PREPARED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the *Book of Mormon* in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.
2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the people of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archaeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age in a continuing series of migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.
3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around AD 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. One Of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations, if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camel's and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)

³²³ Tope, *ibid.*, pg. 65.

5. Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.

6. There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Meso-america and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asia and the Near East.

7. No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archaeological remains in Mexico and archaeological remains in Egypt.

8. Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.

9. There are copies of the *Book of Mormon* in the library of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

Some of the greatest scholars in the world, working over many decades, with no hidden agendas or axes to grind arrive at these conclusions. If the LDS church has discovered previously hidden truths, they have not seen fit to share them with the Smithsonian Institution or the scientific world as a whole.

One gentleman who tried desperately during his life as a Mormon to sort out the scripture mess was J. Edward Decker. Ed, a Mormon from the age of 20 until the age of 39 has written many books and pamphlets on the Church. He was an active member, a temple Mormon, a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood and held many positions in the Church. He is currently international director of Saints Alive in Jesus and authored the book *The God Makers*. Exerpts from an article he wrote called *The Massive Mormon Scripture Mess* follows.

SORTING OUT THE SCRIPTURE MESS

Trying to sort out the massive complexities of the Mormon scriptures is somewhat akin to the frustration one might feel trying to rewind a pickup load of tangled fishing line. Every time you feel like you have made some headway, another mess pops up. It would be easy to cut the line, and clear up little sections at a time, but that's the basic problem! The Mormons have never really had to confront their scriptures as a full set of integrated documents that can be measured by simple "scriptural test" procedures. The average Mormon only sees church scripture in the logical context of classroom references within the rigid teaching structure of the LDS instruction manuals.

The Mormon is taught to unequivocally accept the LDS scriptures as the pure word of God, without error or inconsistency. The Bible, the only real standard by which any doctrine can be tested, is then discredited, cutting the LDS scriptures loose from any Biblical accountability. The only acceptable measurement for LDS scripture is the LDS scripture itself and that has already been given the fullest approval of an "infallible present-day prophet." There is no margin for the application of generally accepted scholarship. In the LDS "Articles of Faith," the eighth article states, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God" (Pearl of Great Price, Articles of Faith, article 8).

Mormonism teaches that there are several problems with the Bible. First, many of its books are missing, so it is only an incomplete compilation at best. Second, we are told that many plain and precious things were taken away from the Bible by that "great and abominable church," as recorded in I Nephi 13:25-28 in the *Book of Mormon*. The very document requiring Biblical testing discredits its only credible witness!

The final severance from Biblical accountability is the continued LDS teaching that what was left of the scriptures has been so often and badly translated that our present Bible is of almost no "stand alone" value. Apostle Orson Pratt summed up the LDS position when he stated "..... and who, in his right mind, could for one moment, suppose

the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?”³²⁴

The Mormon church can't have it both ways. They attempt to use the Bible to authenticate the *Book of Mormon* using very weak arguments with no substance whatsoever. But whenever the Bible truth condemns the *Book of Mormon* or contradicts any of its teachings, the LDS leaders rely on their fallback position which questions the “accurate translation” of the Bible.

Joseph Smith taught, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.”³²⁵

What we end up with is a set of spiritual laws that force the LDS people to judge their scripture by their own measure of faith and not by any outside influence. Even if there is an obvious contradiction with the LDS scripture and what is being taught by the present prophet, the Mormon cannot judge or test the prophet by the scripture. According to LDS General Authority and President of the Council of The Twelve, Ezra Taft Benson, the LDS doctrine is that the living prophet is above scripture. There is absolutely no way out. The finality of the Mormon theology is not based upon evaluation by scriptural evidence, but based entirely upon a “burning in the bosom.” Again, LDS Scripture demands this final proof of itself and tells you this is what you must seek. In a word of admonition to Oliver Cowdery during the translation of the *Book of Mormon*, the Mormon god, through Joseph Smith, declared, “But behold, I say unto you that you must study it out in your own mind; then you must ask me if it is right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong...”³²⁶

When the Mormon missionaries come into a home, they will talk about the prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and will instruct the investigator to read the *Book of Mormon* and to pray about it. They will encourage the reader to seek that divine burning in the bosom which will prove that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and the *Book of Mormon* is really scripture. Moroni 10:4 will be quoted, “And when you have received these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Notwithstanding the fact that the sentence structure has the response triggered as an answer that “these things are NOT true,” the missionary use of the quote is to put the burden of proof on the investigator's sincere heart and real intent. The investigator will feel good about it. It all becomes a subjective evaluation. The scripture and prophet are not to be tested. The doctrines are not to be tested. They are to be prayed about and this divine burning in the bosom will be the proof that they are delivering divine truth to you from God.

Ed Decker relates his early experiences as a Mormon. From the beginning he was plagued with doubts about the truth of the Mormon gospel. He relates:

“I can vividly remember lying on my bed for the better part of a whole night crying out to God for a burning in my bosom so that I would know the church was true. Hour after hour I lay there, with my breast lifted upward, as though it were on an altar of sacrifice, pleading for the evidence of this eternal truth. I knew that my heart was sincere, and yet the guilt of my not experiencing the manifestation was almost more than I could bear.

“Finally, many hours into my vigil, that burning came. I felt an actual, physical burning sensation in my breast. I would later testify that it was as though I had a rise of 7 or 8 degrees. My chest was at a high fever temperature. I rejoiced in the certainty of my faith. Yet, I never checked one teaching of the missionaries against the Holy Bible to see if it matched up.

“It is kind of interesting that when Carol Decker prayed the prayer of Moroni 10:4 as a born-again believer when she read the *Book of Mormon* to seek to know of its truth, she would fall asleep and experience that stupor Oliver Cowdery was told would be the evidence of untruth. Perhaps she was praying to the wrong God. When I prayed it, not being born-again, I prayed as instructed by the missionaries. I received one answer and she a totally different one. Yet, we were both sincere. What was the difference? It is also interesting to note that the LDS church recently published its own edition of the King James Bible. An article, “Church Publishes First LDS Edition Of The Bible,” by Lavina F. Anderson, appeared in the October 1979 edition of the Ensign magazine and described the enormous

³²⁴ Orson Pratt, *The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide*, Early LDS Pamphlet, pages 44-47.

³²⁵ Joseph F. Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, page 327.

³²⁶ *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 9:8-9.

project and the intense commitment of the project workers to cross-reference this edition to the other standard works of the church.

“Aside from the very obvious question of why the prophet did not add back all the plain and precious parts and correct the translation errors plaguing the Bible all these years, one comment regarding the project almost flew off the page like a fiery arrow imbedding itself into the center of my burned-out bosom. In the last paragraph of the article the writer concluded, “Brother Rasmussen added, ‘Sometimes Brother Patch and I would be discussing a matter of linguistics, and, as we concluded, one of us would remark, “That feels good.” I suppose to some people this might seem like a slipshod way to be scholars, but we could tell when we were moving in the proper direction and we could certainly identify the stupor that came over us when we weren’t.’ He paused, then added quietly, ‘In some ways, scholarship was the least important part of our work.’”³²⁷

“One area of this study clarified a long-debated topic among the various subgroupings within the various branches of Josephite or Restorationist churches. It dealt with the authenticity of a manuscript called the Inspired Version of the Bible, written by Joseph Smith prior to his death. The copyrighted property of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints [RLDS], was never given full credentials by the Utah branch until its release of the LDS edition of the King James Bible.

“It is quite significant that this new Edition firmly places the Inspired Version in the position of a Standard Work. The Title Page classifies the Edition as “Authorized King James Version With Explanatory Notes And Cross References to the Standard Works Of the Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints.” In the “Explanation Concerning Footnotes,” on page vi, it identifies JST as the code for the Joseph Smith Translation, which is referenced throughout the LDS Edition, in clarification of some of the errors in the King James Edition,

“At a recent showing of the film, *The God Makers*, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, during the question and answer time following the film, I was making the point that all this extra-Biblical scripture was out of order with God’s Word. Among the several references I gave was the scripture in Revelations 22:18-19. It clearly stated, I said, that anyone who would add to the Bible or subtract from it in any way was in deep trouble with God.

“A Mormon woman in the group challenged me on this statement and emphatically declared that this was only in reference to the Book of Revelation in its single content and had no bearing upon any other book of scripture, including any Latter-Day scripture. I asked her if these curses would be in effect if anyone had dared to alter just the Book of Revelation in any way. She replied that this was obviously so.

“I then showed her that in the Joseph Smith Translation: he had added to, or subtracted from the Book of Revelation over 85 times³²⁸

“Even in the smallest context of the warning, Joseph Smith stands condemned as a false prophet,” I declared. She stared in shock. Later, an LDS leader came up to me after the meeting and quietly whispered, “It doesn’t matter, he was just adjusting the incorrect parts. I know that he is a true Prophet!” Setting aside all the Mormon claims of divine illumination for the moment, let’s seriously “consider” the *Book of Mormon* on its own merit. The major question isn’t how to begin such an evaluation, but where. In one of several forms of an undated LDS tract, entitled, “The Challenge The *Book of Mormon* Makes To The World,” the last paragraph caught my eye.

“It states, ‘The first thing to do in examining any ancient text is to consider it in the light of the origin and background that is claimed for it. If it fits into that background, there is no need to look any farther since historical forgery is virtually impossible.’ While that is not necessarily true, we can use it as a fair statement of the LDS position with regard to the *Book of Mormon*.”

PAGE ONE

Starting with the very first page of the *Book of Mormon*, in the First Book of Nephi, we read the account of Lehi, the key prophet of the second migration. It is through this man that the actual *Book of Mormon* story comes forth. In I Nephi 1:4, we are told that “For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, King

³²⁷ *Ensign Magazine*, October 1979, page 18.

³²⁸ Edvalson & Smith, *Plain and Precious Parts*, published by the Seventy’s Mission Bookstore, Provo, Utah, 1977, pages 62-63.

of Judah, (My father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days); and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.”

Throughout the rest of Chapters One and Two, we see that Lehi is a mighty Prophet of the Lord, and after much danger leaves the city of Jerusalem at the Lord’s bidding.

Taking the clue that we are dealing with the reign of Zedekiah, we are able to go to II Kings 24:17-18 and see that Zedekiah reigned for 11 years, starting about 600 B.C. and ending his reign with the 4th and last siege of Jerusalem. This siege was conducted by Nebuchadnezzar and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity.

At that time Daniel and Ezekiel had already been taken captive to Babylon-Daniel in the first siege and Ezekiel in the third siege. The only prophet left in Jerusalem during Zedekiah’s reign was Jeremiah and he makes that perfectly clear:

Jeremiah 2:8 “and the prophets prophesied by Baal” 5:31 “and the prophets prophesy falsely” 6:13 “and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” 8:10 “every one dealeth falsely.” 14:13-16 “the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, . . . They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination.” 23:16 “Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you” 23:21 “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken unto them yet they prophesied” 27:14-17 “Therefore Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, ye shall serve not the King of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you ... hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you ... hearken not unto them; serve the King of Babylon and live.” 29:8, 9 “Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you deceive you.... for they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.”

All these scriptures warn the people NOT to listen to ANY of the other prophets because they were ALL false and spoke lies. It is quite clear that Jeremiah was the only true prophet of God left in Jerusalem during the reign of Zedekiah. Since God didn’t deliver Ezekiel and Daniel and Jeremiah from bondage, but wanted all the people to serve the King of Babylon, why would he favor a Biblically unnamed prophet with a message in total contradiction to the one given to Jeremiah for the whole nation of Israel? He gave absolutely no Biblical indication that some had to serve in Babylon, but some would be spared. In fact, He gave some pretty severe warnings to those who would attempt to escape captivity. In Jeremiah 28, we read about the false prophet, Hananiah, who taught rebellion against the Lord. If the judgment of the Lord against Hananiah was death, why would God call and send forth another prophet, Lehi, with the same rebellious message to the very same people and call him a true prophet? Impossible!

If the *Book of Mormon* were true scripture, Lehi would have to be in direct DISOBEDIENCE to God in leaving Jerusalem to escape capture and bondage in Babylon. So, coming back to page one of the *Book of Mormon*, it immediately fails the basic test. It does not fit into its time frame correctly as true scripture. One need not go a page further to know that we are dealing with a false prophet.

OUT OF THE DUST

Let’s look at it from another angle. LeGrand Richards, in his famous missionary book, *A Marvelous Work and Wonder* describes the Biblical prophecies fulfilled by the *Book of Mormon*. He uses Isaiah 29:4 as a proof text of the coming forth of the *Book of Mormon*, “And thou shalt be brought down and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.”

Richards comments, “Now, obviously, the only way a dead people could speak “out of the ground” or “out of the dust” would be by the written word and this was done through the *Book of Mormon*. Truly, it has a familiar spirit, for it contains the words of the prophets of the God of Israel.”³²⁹

Unfortunately for *Book of Mormon* scholarship, the Hebrew word for “familiar spirit” in this passage of Isaiah is the word, “OB” which is translated in the King James as Familiar Spirit. In the Hebrew, the word means necromancer, or a spirit of witchcraft. There are 15 Old Testament references to familiar spirits and all of them deal with witchcraft. The word for whisper here also means “chirp or peep,” in the same context.

³²⁹ LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and Wonder*, page 69.

The Apostle, LeGrand Richards, and the tens of thousands of Mormons who use his words as evidence that the *Book of Mormon* has this same “familiar spirit” tie their scripture solidly to witchcraft. They are heartily welcome to the label. Again, without raving shouts, the *Book of Mormon* fails its own challenge.

STICKS AND SCROLLS

Of the several other key Biblical prophecies of the *Book of Mormon*, one other stands out as the most common of all LDS “proof” scriptures. It is in Ezekiel 37:15-17. The Scripture reads as follows,

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall be one in thine hand. And when the children of they people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions, and I will put them with him, even the stick of Judah, and they shall be one in mine hand.

This passage, like all other passages and verses in the Bible, doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It fits into a chapter, which fits into a book, which fits into the Bible as a whole. In order to interpret this or any other passage, we need to follow the flow of thought, just as we would when reading anything else. This flow of thought is often called “context.” In this case, we find that the context involves a specific era of time, and this section fits into it. From chapter 34 through the end of the book, Ezekiel is prophesying of the return of the nation Israel to their land after the Babylonian captivity. This passage is right in the middle of that. We should realize that at the time Ezekiel wrote his book, the Israeli people were divided into two kingdoms, called Judah and Israel (see I Kings 12:16-24), each with their own king. As we can see by reading beyond the passage and examining the context, God was not finished speaking at the end of verse 19. Starting with verse 20, He himself gives the interpretation of this prophecy.

He tells us that, after the captivity, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (the latter called “Ephraim” here, as it is in Hosea and elsewhere) will no longer be separate, but will be one kingdom with a single king over them. The Mormon interpretation ignores and disagrees with God’s.

What was happening in this scripture? If you read the very next few verses, the people ask Ezekiel what he meant and he explained that the sticks represented the two Kingdoms of Israel which shall be joined together just as the sticks were in his hands (verses 18-22). Further, it was Ezekiel who wrote on both sticks. He obviously did not write both the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*. Again, the point is that the evidence of such an interpretation of this prophecy just does not exist. Ezekiel clearly defined the exact conditions and scope of the prophecy and we have concrete historical evidence of its fulfillment.

The LDS Church teaches that the sticks mentioned above are really scrolls (rolled on the sticks). The sticks, they say, refer to scrolls, the ancient form of book. The stick of Judah is seen to be the Bible, as it records the history primarily of that tribe. The stick of Joseph is in like manner the *Book of Mormon*, as it records the history of his descendants in the New World. This then is a prophetic command to make these two records, and then at a later date, combine them into a single record that will tell of the same God, the joining into one stick refers to this.

This is made clearly evident in the LDS scripture “.... and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto to you to reveal the *Book of Mormon*, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim.”³³⁰

In actuality, the Hebrew word used here for stick is “ES,” or “ETS,” meaning wood, tree, or stick. The Hebrew words for scroll or roll or book or writing include Sepher, Dabar, Sephar, and Siphrah. Now, the Old Testament talks about sticks, rolls, books, writings, scrolls, and so on. Nowhere in the Bible is a stick used to symbolize a scroll.

The prophet himself refers to “a roll of the book,” meaning a scroll, in Ezekiel 2:9, and this is the normal Biblical phrase used to denote a scroll. The Hebrew word used here is ATES, which is translated as “stick” only 14 times in the entire Old Testament, 8 of those times right here in this passage. It is the only Hebrew word translated stick in

³³⁰ D&C 27:5.

the Bible, but it is also translated by other English words. You will find it translated “planks” in Ezekiel 41:25, and as “timber” in Ezekiel 26:12. It is most often translated as “tree” (163 times), as it is in Ezekiel 36:30. Of the more than 300 times it is used, it never has any reference to scrolls-basically it means a piece of cut wood. Come to think of it, if ATEŠ had been translated by any one of a number of possible English words other than “stick” (like perhaps “wood,” as it is in Ezekiel 24:10 and over 100 other places), the Mormon interpretation of this prophecy would simply not exist. This is because the idea of a second record or Scripture is based solely on the English translation, and has no support from the original Hebrew usage. As a result, it is not a valid interpretation.

THE STICK OF JUDAH

In order for the official Mormon interpretation to be seriously considered, the Bible would have to record primarily the history of the Hebrew tribe of Judah. And yet, when we look at the Bible itself, we find it records extensively the history of all the tribes of Israel. You will find the story of the formation of the tribes in Genesis; the history of their escape from Egypt and wanderings in the wilderness in Exodus through Deuteronomy; the account of their conquest of Canaan in Joshua; and the record of their later years up through the captivity in Judges through Kings. In each case, it is all the tribes that are seen, with Judah receiving no special amount of spotlight. It is only in the Chronicles and a few of the prophetic writings that any special focus on the divided kingdom named Judah is seen. And then in the New Testament, Jesus, Paul and James refer to all twelve tribes (Matthew 19:28; Acts 26:7; James 1:1; etc.), since they all are of equal importance, and they all were still present in Palestine. Thus, it becomes apparent that the Mormon interpretation doesn’t fit the context, the word usage, or even the literary and historical facts. In view of this, there is no real reason to accept Mormonism’s interpretation or even take it seriously.

BUT LET’S BE FAIR ABOUT THIS!

What if this is a prophecy of a second book of Scripture like the *Book of Mormon* claims to be, despite all these problems. In order to be fair, and give the Mormon interpretation a chance to vindicate itself, we need to check and see if the *Book of Mormon* actually fulfills the specific requirements of the prophecy. So, for the moment, we’ll assume the Mormon interpretation of the passage is accurate, and then see if the *Book of Mormon* fits.

THE STICK OF JOSEPH

The funny thing is, the *Book of Mormon* never calls itself the stick of Joseph. Now, we admit this is a minor point, but it would be logical to expect the *Book of Mormon* to refer to itself as such at least once. The Bible supposedly calls itself the stick of Judah (although only this one time), and the *Book of Mormon* should be more than willing to identify itself as the counterpart stick of Joseph. Unless, of course, the “prophecy” (or, more accurately, the Mormon interpretation of the prophecy) is one that was found in a search to provide Biblical support after the *Book of Mormon* was written-that would “explain” a lot of these problems.

IF A STICK IS A SCROLL.....

The prophecy as interpreted by the Mormon church requires that the “stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim” be written on scrolls. If that is what a stick is referring to, the only way it could be fulfilled is if this second record is written on a scroll. However, all reports from the Mormon church indicate the *Book of Mormon* was written on gold plates, never on scrolls. So, if a stick does mean a scroll, the *Book of Mormon* is automatically eliminated from consideration.

THE STICK OF EPHRAIM

The Bible records Israel’s son Joseph as having only two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 41:50-52). If this prophecy is of a second record or Scripture, it must record the history of the second of these sons, Ephraim. This is because if the “stick of Judah” refers to the history of Judah’s descendants, and the “stick of Joseph” is the similar record of his descendants, the stick of Ephraim (which is obviously the same record as that of Joseph) must record Joseph’s descendants through Ephraim. And yet, the *Book of Mormon* itself, in Alma 10:3, shows that it is really the supposed history of Manasseh’s descendants, not Ephraim’s. As evidenced by its own text, the *Book of Mormon* fails on this part of the prophecy as well. The only remaining conclusion is whether you accept the Mormon

interpretation, or reject it because of all the problems with context and all, the *Book of Mormon* is definitely not prophesied by Ezekiel 37:15-19.

It's time we look at another "prophecy" of the *Book of Mormon*. We won't examine this one quite as closely, but a few points do need to be made about it, as will become clear.

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." Isaiah 29:4

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO MORMONISM?

This prophecy refers to how the *Book of Mormon* was brought out of the ground, a record of an ancient people in that way speaking out of the dust. The *Book of Mormon* prophet, Moroni, even applies this prophecy to this record in Moroni 10:27. In addition, it should be noted that the *Book of Mormon* has a familiar spirit. "Truly it has a familiar spirit, for it contains the words of the prophets of the God of Israel."³³¹ Had LeGrand Richards concentrated more on the true scripture, he would have found that familiar spirits are an abomination to the Lord (Deut. 18:11-12, Lev. 19:31). Then again, he could have known more than we give him credit for.

WHO IS HE SPEAKING TO?

Once again, let's check the context. Right away, we find this prophecy is being given to the inhabitants of a city called "Ariel" (Isaiah 29:1, 2, 7). With a little investigation, we can determine that "Ariel" (meaning "hearth of God") is actually a reference to Jerusalem, David's capital city and the location of the Temple where sacrifices were offered. It is in no way referring to any distant people, or a record they have buried, since the chapter and those following pronounce severe judgment upon the city by the Lord for trusting in Egypt rather than Him for defense (see chapters 30 and 31). Most of the events described actually happened when Judah went into the Babylonian captivity several years later, so it cannot be applied to another, even later event. So, once again, the context completely rules out the possibility that this refers to a branch of Israel, in a distant land, having their record buried and brought out of the dust.

BUT WHAT IF IT'S TRUE?

As we did before, in order to be fair we should operate on the assumption that the prophecy is speaking of the *Book of Mormon*. About the only thing we'd like to look at closely is the claim that it has a familiar spirit. Nearly any Mormon would be glad to bear his testimony that it does, without a doubt, have a familiar spirit-and perhaps it does. You see, the Bible uses this term other places, and we can learn a lot from how it is used there. Before reading any further, get your Bible and look up Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27 and Deuteronomy 18:9-12. It is very important you read these in the King James Version. You have probably reached the obvious conclusion that according to the Word of God, anyone (or in this case, anything) who has a familiar spirit is an abomination before God and should be destroyed. This is because we would call a person who has a familiar spirit a medium; in other words, a person who is on friendly terms with demons. The prophet, by the way, uses the phrase with the same meaning in Isaiah 8:19 and 19:3, so it is clear he means the same thing in this passage. So, if the Mormon church wishes to claim the *Book of Mormon* has a familiar spirit, that's fine by us-but don't be surprised when we don't accept it as the Word of God.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

There are a number of similar "prophecies" we could go through (like Genesis 49:22; Isaiah 29:11, 12 and Revelation 14:6, 7) that are used by the Mormon church to support the contention that the *Book of Mormon* is the Word of God. Each of these falls apart, just like these two, and for the same reasons when examined closely. Check them out for yourself, and see what we mean. In fact, you are strongly encouraged carefully examine everything that people say the Bible teaches to see if it is really there.

³³¹ LeGrand Richards, *ibid.*, pg. 67 & 68.

Having examined what the Bible says by and for ourselves, we find we can confidently say that, except for the prophecies of Mark 13:21-23 and Luke 21:8, the Bible clearly does not prophesy of the *Book of Mormon*. There is no internal evidence from the Bible of a future set of scriptures such as the Mormons claim. The LDS effort to fit the *Book of Mormon* into Biblical context has no point of reference.

THE PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T THERE

Let's look at the *Book of Mormon* in the historic sense. God is not obtuse. If this great society existed in the Americas, the evidences would have to be there. Sandra Tanner, a leading expert on the Mormon question, commented, "The *Book of Mormon* claims to be an actual historical record translated from real plates that Joseph Smith unearthed in a hill in New York. Now, if this is a genuine history, one would assume you could study this, just like you would study any historical book."

"When I study the Bible, I can approach it as a total atheist or as a believer in Christ," she continued, "but either way I can study the book historically. It does not require a 'testimony.' You can determine where Jerusalem is; you can determine that there was a Hebrew language. When we turn to the *Book of Mormon* we have nothing. There is no Nephite language, there are no Nephite cities, there is not a map in any *Book of Mormon*, you cannot locate any sites. There is no evidence for the book and yet it's supposed to be an historical record."

When asked about this during the filming of *The God Makers* film, LDS Mission President Harold Goodman commented, "Many people do not understand the *Book of Mormon*. This is a history of the people that inhabited the American Continent-North, South, and Central America, from about 600 B.C. to about 420 AD, and we have much evidence, of course, of people having lived there."

We all know that a large, complex society did exist there during those years of *Book of Mormon* history. The question is still, "Does the *Book of Mormon* fit the time frame?" We do not think it does. Yet, the Mormons will claim it does with fervent zeal, and that same burning testimony. President Goodman is aware that Mormon missionaries throughout the world are converting people to the Mormon church by explaining to them that archaeology has proven the *Book of Mormon* to be true. Slide presentations, special firesides, and film strips are used along with volumes of specially books on the subject, available wherever LDS books are sold.

Where are all these "evidences" so readily available as proof? How can they be and not be at the same time? Either they exist as presented by the Mormons or they don't. We can't play games with historic facts.

In the LDS visitors centers throughout the Church, a painting by the artist, John Scott, is displayed. Copies are available in great abundance wherever LDS materials are sold. The painting is called, "The Resurrected Christ in America." What is so important about this painting? It represents Christ standing before the multitudes in front of several of the temples in Meso-America, graphically tying in to the millions who have viewed this painting of Jesus, the *Book of Mormon* and the temples of these early civilizations. What is wrong? Neither temple existed until about 1000 AD, almost 10 centuries AFTER the supposed appearance of Christ in the Americas!

The two temples are actually very well known: they are El Castillo and El Caracol, both found on the Yucatan peninsula at the Mayan city of Chichinitza. They are also used in one of the well-known LDS proof works, "The Trial of the Stick of Joseph," by Jack West. In both representations, their use can only be out of blind ignorance or blatant deception.

The fact that the painting is an artist's rendition is not important. It is important that it is published widely by the church as an expression of implied fact. The same painting is used, in part, as the cover of an LDS pamphlet, "Christ in America" written by Apostle Mark E. Petersen and published in 1983. Jack West's representation may also be waved away as the work of an individual, yet it is used widely to convert people out of the Christian body through the use of open deception.

Could the church and people like Jack West be just blind to the facts? We think not. Our Friend, Jack Sande, wrote to John L. Sorenson, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, at Brigham Young University and asked him about this problem, after receiving a copy of the West book from a Mormon Bishop. In a letter to Jack, dated October 5, 1981, John Sorenson replied, "I understand that people who have not had educational experiences concerning archaeology could be enthusiastic about books like these of West or Farnsworth when they see these as supporting the *Book of Mormon* in which they strongly believe. I presume the Bishop who gave you the West volume would fall into that class overcome by zeal. Nevertheless, the fact remains that those books are worse than

useless, because they are not reasonably close to the truth. I wish the zealous had other options open to them in the way of truthful books, but at the moment, that is a problem.”

John Sorenson sounded like a pretty up-front scholar. We went to a work of his, dated 1980 and found that he had made a couple of very significant observations. First, regarding the Bible, Sorenson said,

Learning about context seems unimportant to some readers of the book [Book of Mormon]; others consider it impossible. To me the Bible is a model in this regard. Biblical scholarship has illuminated certain inobvious meanings of that scriptural text showing the complex interplay between human and divine influences and establishing the Bible as a record all the more profound because it is anchored in a complex reality of time, space, and behavior. I have wanted that same illumination for Lehi's people and their book.

And what of that book? He made no evasive apologies, but hit directly home with his point,

*After nearly 150 years since the Nephite record was first published by Joseph Smith, we Mormons have been unable confidently to pin down the location of a single city, identify even one route they traversed, or sketch an accurate picture of any segment of the life they lived in their American promised land. In many respects, the Book of Mormon remains a sealed book to us because we have been incapable of placing it in its specific setting.*³³²

John Sorenson is not the only Mormon scholar who is a realist in this matter. Dr. Ross T. Christensen, BYU professor and head of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology, stands by his side. Over twenty years earlier, in an article for the University Archaeological Society, Dr. Christensen wrote:

*In the first place, the statement that the Book of Mormon has already been proved by archaeology is misleading. The truth of the matter is that we are only beginning to see even the outlines of the archaeological time-periods which could compare with those of the Book of Mormon. How, then, can the matter have been settled once and for all? That such an idea could exist indicates the ignorance of many of our people with regard to what is going on in the historical and anthropological sciences. With the exception of Latter-Day Saint archaeologists, members of the archaeological profession do not, and never have espoused the Book of Mormon in any sense of which I am aware. As for the notion that the Book of Mormon has already been proved by archaeology, I must say with Shakespeare, 'Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.'*³³³

Another honest Mormon scholar, Dee F. Green, asserts, “the first myth we need to eliminate is that *Book of Mormon* Archaeology exists.” He has termed the Church's current approach to Mormon Archaeology as a back door one, and he is right³³⁴.

Martin Raish, a Doctoral candidate and teacher of Art History at BYU, wrote one of the best scholarly reports I have ever read on this subject of amateur attempts to prove the *Book of Mormon* through historic evidence³³⁵.

He goes through the works of such men as Jack West, Dewey Farnsworth, Paul Cheeseman, and Wayne Hamby, showing the exact manner in which the reader of their works is manipulated with sweeping assumptions, questionable artifacts, misdated archaeology and mismatched scriptures and pictures, all designed to assure the reader that the *Book of Mormon* is fact. Raish cautions the LDS community that these pseudo-scholarly tactics thwart the best efforts of the LDS professionals. He concludes that “I do not think that we will ever prove the *Book of Mormon* to be true through archaeological evidences any more than we can yet prove the date of the Creation through scientific means alone.”³³⁶

³³² John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting For The Book of Mormon*, 1980, pages 0/2-0/3.

³³³ Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III:4; Dr. Ross T. Christensen, The University Archaeological Society Report, No. 19, December, 1960, pages 8-9.

³³⁴ Michael Coe, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Mormons and Archaeology, An Outside View, pages 40-48.

³³⁵ *Sunstone Magazine*, January/February 1981.

³³⁶ Martin Raish, All That Glitters: Uncovering Fool's Gold in Book of Mormon Archaeology, *Sunstone*, Vol. 6:1, pages 10-15.

So we fall back again on the “Challenge the *Book of Mormon* makes to the World,” that we spoke of earlier. It has to fit its time frame. This is not only reasonable, this is imperative. Yet, while it is the very standard for the Bible, it appears to be impossible for the *Book of Mormon*.

Dr. Charles Crane has spent most of his lifetime studying the Bible and also the LDS scriptures. He is an active student of both Bible and Mormon Archaeology. He explained the differences with us. “The simple facts,” he said, “are that the truth does not match the LDS stories. While the accuracy of the Bible has been vindicated time and again, we have yet to find the first *Book of Mormon* City.

The Mormon nonscholars keep trying to “associate” with the historic evidences of the Aztec and Mayan temple builders. Yet, at every corner, warning flags leap up. On March 26th, 1982, the Utah Museum of Natural History held a presentation by Nicholas M. Hellmuth. His subject: The Human Sacrificial Practices of the Maya.

Archaeological findings push back the Mayan origins to 9000 B.C.³³⁷. In his book, *Christ in Ancient America*, Volume II, Dr. Milton R. Hunter, then a member of the First Council of the Seventy, described the Quetzalcoatl god of the Aztecs and the Olmecs as Jesus. He states, “Quetzalcoatl could have been none other than Jesus the Christ, the Lord and God of this earth, and the Savior of the human family. Thus Jesus Christ and Quetzalcoatl are identical.” He further quotes LDS President and Prophet John Taylor, who in 1882 stated, “The story of the life of the Mexican divinity, Quetzalcoatl, closely resembles that of the Savior; so closely, indeed, that we can come to no other conclusion than that Quetzalcoatl and Christ are the same being.”³³⁸ He later explains that Quetzalcoatl was represented as the “Feathered Serpent,” which has its identification with the “Plumed Serpent” of Egyptian origin, and the serpent in the Garden of Eden. “The serpent in early times was also identified with the Crucifixion and hence was also a symbol of the Son of Man.” He goes on to explain, “In this Chapter and throughout the book, the serpent will be presented as a symbol of Quetzalcoatl or Jesus and no further reference will be made to its identification with the Prince of Darkness or Lucifer.”³³⁹

A beginning scholar of Meso-American history would quickly discover this to be utter nonsense. Quetzalcoatl dates back into the far distance before the *Book of Mormon* era began. He was the God of learning and civilization and he appeared in the Olmec religion around 2000 B.C. The Feathered Serpent was a pagan idol requiring blood sacrifice. From this point and all through the temple building eras surrounding the *Book of Mormon* dating, the Feathered Serpent God Cult began to take over and the once beneficent Quetzalcoatl was incarnated into the bloodthirsty Feathered Serpent. Untold hundreds of thousands of innocent victims died to offer up their still-beating hearts to this bloody idol during the so-called *Book of Mormon* years. If this is the American Jesus Christ of Mormonism, they are welcome to him!

It wasn't until many hundreds of years beyond the Nephite era that a Toltec king named Ce Acatl Topiltzin ascended the throne and took the name of Quetzalcoatl and sought to reestablish the gentle theology of the original god as the principle deity of the Toltec nation. This took place in 968 AD. The bloodthirsty priests disgraced and banished him from the nation. This gentle king promised to return in a “one reed year” (Mayan Calendar), and hence the legend of the return of Quetzalcoatl. By the way, Cortez landed in 1519, a “one reed year”!³⁴⁰

Returning again to the task of trying to fit the *Book of Mormon* into its own background and time frame, let's look at one of literally hundreds of conditions that make it impossible. Assuming that Lehi was right and Jeremiah wrong, and assuming that these travelers truly did land on the western shores of the Americas somewhere . . . then, let's evaluate one of the major activities of this group in light of history and fact.

In II Nephi, Chapter 5, Nephi separates himself and his family, along with his two brothers and their families, and takes along his two young brothers and his sisters. Bear in mind that this whole story takes place before 30 years have passed since they left Jerusalem. Just getting to the boat took enough time that Jacob and Joseph were born . . . so we can't be talking about more than 20-25 years at best.

In all, we are talking about three grown men, several young boys, and a very small number of women and children. In II Nephi 5:15-17, Nephi describes how they built a temple constructed after the manner of the Temple of Solomon. Just try to envision less than a dozen able-bodied people building a temple “like unto Solomon's.” Solomon's Temple was built of stone, precious metals, and enough cedar to keep 80,000 hewers of wood busy (I Kings 5:13-

³³⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 25, 1980 (section G, page 1), article by New York Times writer, Boyce Rensberger.

³³⁸ Dr. Charles Crane, *A Comparison of the Bible and the Book of Mormon*, pages 9-11.

³³⁹ Milton R. Hunter, *Christ in Ancient America*, Vol. II, pages 51-53).

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*, page 121.

15). It took Solomon over 7 years (2 Kings 6:38), and well over 150,000 full-time workers (II Chronicles 2:18). Then try to ignore the fact that in verse 15 he claims that the temple was built with all manner of wood, iron, steel (not found in the Americas for over another 1500 years), gold, silver, and precious ores which “were in great abundance”; then in verse 16, he claims they could not use these things since they were not to be found upon the land.

At the completion of this great temple, and still within the 30 years since leaving Jerusalem, Nephi reports that the people desired that he should be made king. Remember, this is a small clan of not two dozen people, men, women and children included. Again, the *Book of Mormon* cannot fit into its background and time frame. It is a failure in every sense of what it pretends to be. There is one final item of significance that I’d like to discuss, and it’s one that is totally outside anything I have read about the *Book of Mormon* or any of its promoters’ claims or its critics’ challenges.

If we were to gather together four or five families and leave for an unknown land to be able to worship in our own manner, we would probably take our scriptures and our form of worship and develop our religious practices in a very fundamentalist manner—a form of worship that would have a lasting effect upon our new society. One thing for which the Jewish faith is noted for is its tenacity over centuries of time to maintain its own identity. This is not represented by a single shred of evidence anywhere in the Americas of the *Book of Mormon*. Another unmovable Jewish trait is the utter inability of anyone to destroy the Hebrew language throughout centuries of time. Again, not a shred of an example appears in the Mormon claim. Instead, we are asked to believe that devout Jewish scholars would transcribe their most sacred scriptures in “reformed Egyptian.” Bear in mind that the Hebrew people were forbidden to deal with anything Egyptian. To do so would defile the priesthood of God! (Neh. 13:23-31).

CHECK THE CALENDAR

Lastly, if we were to embark on such a journey, we would take our calendar! This is the final flaw in there being any possibility of the *Book of Mormon* being true, or Jewish in the slightest. Did the people who lived in the Americas between 600 B.C. and 420 AD have anything even remotely resembling the Jewish 360 day calendar? Did their months and holidays bear any name resemblance? If not, they could not have been Jewish! In actuality, approximately three thousand years ago, on the coastal plain of southern Mexico, a priest received a revelation from the Sun God that not only determined the course of history for Meso-America, but destroyed the remotest possibility of the *Book of Mormon* being a true history of these people. “At precisely Noon on the date we call August 13, probably in the year 1358 B.C., the priest noticed that no tree, pillar, or post cast a shadow.” Counting the days to the next such experience, he finally was rewarded 260 days later, and again after another 105 days, on the next August 13th, it occurred again.” These events took place at Izapa, a ceremonial center on the Mexico-Guatemalan border. And here began a sacred calendar of a 13-unit cycle with 20-day names, known as the “Tzolkin or Tonalamatl.” Once in place, this almanac became the basis of all religions, art, and science in the civilizations that followed. The Izapans used the sacred calendar names to name their chiefs and nobles. These names were designated by “one of 20 animals important to the local mythology, such as Alligator, Buzzard, Eagle, Jaguar, Snake, Deer, etc.” Each 52 years, they would recycle the whole process.

Even after they realized the significance of the 365-day solar calendar, this sacred calendar tied together the nations and religions of this entire part of the world. Under no circumstance could such a complex calendar exist and extend its influence out across the many centuries if the advanced civilization of the 1000 year *Book of Mormon* era ever existed.³⁴¹

WHAT MORE CAN WE SAY?

What more can we say? The *Book of Mormon* has had over 4,000 changes to it, and yet, it’s supposed to be the “most perfect book in the world” according to its translator. Eleven grown men bore witness to its reality, yet eight of these left the Church as apostates. There has never been a gold plate found of such as was described by Joseph Smith and brass plates such as the ones described as containing the Jewish scriptures taken from Jerusalem have never been discovered. Not one exists anywhere in the Jewish world.

Further, why would God speak to a nineteenth-century American in archaic, seventeenth-century English? Would he speak that way to a Peruvian? Is God limited somehow to King James English as His official language? Where do we stop and account for what has been said?

³⁴¹ James Witham, *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, a slide presentation with notes, pages 5-8.

HOW TO DEAL WITH TRUTH AND INCOMPATIBILITIES

Those that desire to know more about the Mormon church would do well to study all available material, both Mormon and non-Mormon. And ask questions! The right questions!

When discussing the church with an LDS member, I was chided for reading “material put out by enemies of the church.” He told me that if I wanted to find the truth about the church, I should “ask a member of the church.” On the surface, that sounds like a legitimate argument. After all, if one wants to determine the truth, one should go to the source.

I responded with another analogy. I asked him how he would respond if an investment banker knocked on his door and offered him a sure fire way of doubling his money in real estate. I asked, “Would you be willing to invest your life’s savings on this real estate based on the bankers word alone?”

The Mormon church has asked potential converts to invest their life’s savings, or more properly, their eternal saving’s to follow a faith that has been riddled with holes and false hopes. They are asking that you “pray about it”; that it might “feel” right. There is no way possible that a thinking person can safely trust a subjective feeling to ensure their eternal destiny. If we choose the wrong path and go to our grave with a “burning in the bosom,” a holy and righteous God will not save us from destruction based on our good motives.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (II Peter 2:1).

Some questions have been posed by a prospective converts that have had the missionaries in their home. They represent questions that are raised after the initial introduction to the LDS Church and after doing what all truth-seeking individuals should do: STUDY THE FACTS!

Q. With all we have discussed, isn’t the church afraid that some intelligent Mormon will raise questions?

A. Yes, but there are ways of dealing with the truth.

Q. Are the Mormon “Apostles” afraid of the truth? Do they deliberately suppress and knowingly hide the history of the Mormon Church?

A. They have from the beginning. And they do continue to do so. And for very real reasons.

Q. What evidence is there of this serious charge?

A. In his eight page article³⁴², Dr. James L. Clayton, Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Utah, has the integrity and courage to question the wisdom of the Mormon Leaders who try to hide the past. He writes: “More recently, I understand that the archives of the LDS Church have been closed to all research into the diaries, letterbooks, and other sensitive materials of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the twelve going back to the 1830’s, diaries and letters long open and currently being used by scholars. Many projects of considerable worth are now stymied or will be finished with incomplete sources. The dismissal of Leonard J. Arrington as Church Historian, the most significant historian since B.H. Roberts, the apparent refusal to complete already signed contracts with other historians working on a multi-volume history of the Church, the movement of the Historical Department from the main source of manuscripts at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City to Brigham Young University, these events raise serious questions regarding the nature and direction of historical inquiry on Mormonism.”³⁴³

Q. Well, it sounds like someone had access for a while anyway, didn’t they?

A. Yes, for a while. Until 1972, a Mormon General Authority had always been “Church Historian” and they kept the wraps on the rich treasure of history described in Newsweek, which observed that “...the LDS archives in Salt

³⁴² Dr. James L. Clayton, Does History Undermine Faith?, *Sunstone Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (March/April 1982).

³⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

Lake City contain what may be the most extensive trove of historical data ever assembled about an American church..."³⁴⁴ In 1972 the Church appointed a professionally trained historian, Leonard J. Arrington, to the position of "Church Historian." Earlier, Dr. Arrington had criticized the Mormon Church for not publishing the diaries of the early Mormon Leaders and for not permitting "qualified" historians to use them without restriction."³⁴⁵ Well, Arrington, in his new post, began to allow more use of the formerly unavailable materials for historical study.

Q. OK. So what happened under Arrington?

A. There began to be a flood of historical articles about the Mormon Church being published in *Brigham Young University Studies*; *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*; *The Journal of Mormon History*, etc.

Q. Well, wasn't that good?

A. Good for who? Good for investigators of Mormonism, but it had a scary effect on the Mormon Apostles. All of a sudden there were articles such as the 44 page piece titled "The Adam-God Doctrine" in the Spring 1982 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* with some 116 footnotes, many of them coming from formerly restricted sources. The article had been preceded by the 42 page article in the Summer 1980 issue of the same journal with the title "*The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict with the Quorums, 1853 to 1868.*" All of a sudden the so-called "prophets" of the Mormon Church were not all that the Mormon leaders had been telling the faithful. Brigham Young believed and taught that Adam was the Father of Jesus Christ. He believed that God was continuing to progress. Apostle Orson Pratt believed Brigham was full of baloney. Even when the Prophet Brigham told him "in the name of the Lord" it wasn't "in the name of the Lord" to Pratt³⁴⁶. The exact quote is: "A very serious conversation took place between Prest. B. Young and O. P. upon doctrine. Orson Pratt was directly opposed to the Prest views and freely expressed his entire disbelief in them after being told by the President that things were so and so in the name of the Lord. He was firm in the Position that Prest's word in the name of the Lord, was not the word of the Lord to him." (emphasis in original)

Q. Well then, at least Arrington is letting some of the history out isn't he?

A. Arrington WAS. To few people's surprise, he is no longer Church Historian.

Q. Hey, doesn't anyone care? Are there no honest Mormon historians?

A. Some are trying. In the above mentioned Sunstone article by Dr. Clayton, he points out that "Deliberately taking a one-sided approach to history violates, in my judgement, the very essence of the historical craft, which emphasizes honesty, objectivity, and a willingness to tell the truth."³⁴⁷ Clayton observes: "After all historians did not create the past; they are merely trying to understand it."³⁴⁸

Q. OK. But Dr. Clayton is from the University of Utah. What about the faculty of BYU (Brigham Young University) Don't they care about honesty and integrity?

A. ONE DOES. Newsweek Magazine devoted one full page³⁴⁹ to an extraordinary Yale educated Mormon Historian. Newsweek observed: "In a stirring defense of intellectual integrity, historian D. Michael Quinn of Brigham Young University recently warned his school's student history association that the "so-called 'faith promoting' Church history which conceals controversies and difficulties of the Mormon past undermines the faith of Latter-Day Saints who eventually learn of the problems from other sources."³⁵⁰

Q. Why is he the exception? Why don't the other religious and history professors at Brigham Young University stand up for honesty and integrity?

A. What? And lose their jobs?

³⁴⁴ Newsweek, Feb. 15, 1982, p. 77.

³⁴⁵ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, p. 26.

³⁴⁶ *Samuel W. Richards Journal*, 11 March 1856, Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

³⁴⁷ Op. cit. p. 34.

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁴⁹ *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1982, p. 77.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*

Q. How could a BYU professor lose his job by telling the truth?

A. Because one of the Mormon Apostles made it very clear in an address at the Fifth Annual Church Educational System Religious Educator's Symposium on August 22, 1981 at BYU. You can read his entire talk titled "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect" published in the Brigham Young University Studies which is self labeled as A Voice for the Community of LDS Scholars³⁵¹.

Q. What did "Apostle" Packer tell the Mormon Religious Instructors?

A. Early in his talk he observes that "Over the years I have seen many members of the Church lose their testimonies and yield their faith as the price for academic achievement."³⁵² Mind you, this statement is coming from a leader of the Church that liked to boast that the "gospel" contained "all truth" and even has, as a tenet, "The glory of God is intelligence"³⁵³

Q. So the Apostle observed that when many Latter-Day Saints received higher education they left the church. So? Anything else?

A. Yes. In effect, Apostle Packer tells his audience to not tell the whole truth about the Mormon Church?

Q. Come on. Just what did he say?

A. "There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not."³⁵⁴

Q. Wait. Does Mr. Packer not want to tell some things? If not, why not?

A. Because, in his words: "Some things that are true are not very useful" (ibid.).

Q. Useful? Useful for what?

A. Useful for converting new Latter-Day Saints. Packer cautions his audience that: "Teaching some things that are true, prematurely or at the wrong time, can invite sorrow and heartbreak instead of the joy intended to accompany learning ... some things are to be given only to those who are worthy. It matters not only what we are told but when we are told about it. Be careful that you build faith rather than destroy it."³⁵⁵

Q. GOODNESS! This sounds more like the instruction book from the "Moonies" than the words of an "Apostle" of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does he want Mormon historians to lie about their history?

A. Well, he believes that "There are plenty of scholars in the world determined to find all secular truth. There are so few of us, relatively speaking, striving to convey the spiritual truths, who are protecting the Church. We cannot safely be neutral."³⁵⁶

Q. Oh, let's get this straight Can anyone as a faculty member of BYU, write Mormon history, or an article about Mormonism and, in the name of academic freedom or in the name of honesty, relate, to the best of their ability, what actually happened?

A. Packer doesn't beat around the bush. You do have to admire his straight forwardness about a position that almost anyone would be embarrassed to tell a university faculty: "One who chooses to follow the tenets of his profession, regardless of how they may injure the Church or destroy the faith of those not ready for 'advanced history' is himself in spiritual jeopardy. If that one is a member of the Church, he has broken his covenants and will

³⁵¹ *BYU Studies*, Summer 1981 (Vol. 21, No. 3).

³⁵² *ibid.*, p. 259.

³⁵³ Doctrine and Covenants, 93:36.

³⁵⁴ *BYU Studies*, *ibid.*, p. 263.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 265.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 270.

be accountable. After all of the tomorrows of morality have been finished, he will not stand where he might have stood.³⁵⁷

Q. OK, so if a Mormon Historian tells the complete truth which might cause someone to lose faith (and Packer is apparently admitting that there must be plenty of such stuff out there that he doesn't want told) such historian will lose his heavenly blessings. What about his "earthly" blessing, like his paycheck, for example?

A. "I want to say in all seriousness that there is a limit to the patience of the Lord with respect to those who are under covenant to bless and protect His Church and Kingdom upon the earth but do not do it.³⁵⁸" In case that is not clear enough for the Mormon Religious Teachers who are on the payroll of the Mormon Church, the Apostle makes it even more clear. "Those who have carefully purged their work of any religious faith in the name of academic freedom or so-called honesty ought not expect to be accommodated in their researches or to be paid by the Church to do it."³⁵⁹

Q. Do you know of any other BYU scholars that have been canned because of their high regard for the truth?

A. The Salt Lake Tribune related the fate of David P. Wright, former professor of Near Eastern languages at the Mormon-owned and operated Brigham Young University. Wright, who served a mission for the LDS church was fired after four years of teaching because of his beliefs about the *Book of Mormon*. "Mr. Wright says his own research shows that the *Book of Mormon* is best explained as a 19th century 'inspired' work rather than a document translated from ancient records."³⁶⁰ As a result of honest scholarship, Wright was fired.

Commenting on Wright's termination, Michael D. Quinn, also a former professor of Brigham Young University, and the author of the outstanding book *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, drew a very revealing parallel:

"...Mr. Wright's firing is evidence that 'the grinding machine of orthodoxy at BYU is unrelenting. BYU officials have said that Harvard should aspire to become the BYU of the East,' said Mr. Quinn,... 'that's like saying the Mayo Clinic should aspire to be Auschwitz (a Nazi concentration camp). BYU is the Auschwitz of the mind,'"³⁶¹

Q. Well, how do the Mormon Apostles want their history told?

A. Dr. Quinn reports that "apostles" Ezra Taft Benson and Boyd K. Packer want Church history to be as elementary as possible and as defensive as possible.³⁶²

Q. What are the Mormon Leaders afraid of? Are you sure that they cover up their history?

A. Consider the full implication of Dr. Quinn's observation: "Ezra Taft Benson reports with obvious irritation the fact that LDS Seminary and Institute teachers (high school and college LDS religious instructors) ask him, 'When and where can we begin to tell them our REAL STORY?' and Elder Benson observes, 'inferred in that question is the accusation that the Church has not been telling the truth'."³⁶³

Q. This stuff about only telling one side of the story. Is it possible that this literature is misrepresenting Packer's speech?

A. No. Read the speech yourself. His point is all summed up in this one statement "President William E. Barrett has told us how grateful he is that a testimony that the past leaders of the Church were prophets of God was firmly fixed in his mind BEFORE he was exposed to some of the so-called facts that historians have put in their published writings."³⁶⁴ You see, if all of this information or material or whatever Apostle Packer is so very frightened about was not true why doesn't he simply say so? Apparently his weasel words of "so-called facts" should really be

³⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 266.

³⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 266.

³⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 269.

³⁶⁰ Salt Lake Tribune, July 20, 1988; p. B1.

³⁶¹ BYU Studies, *op. cit.*

³⁶² Dr. D. Michael Quinn, *On Being a Mormon Historian*, lecture by before the Student History Association of Brigham Young University, Fall, 1981, p. 20.

³⁶³ BYU Studies, *ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁶⁴ *ibid.*

“facts” and, if he is really an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and he really is representing the “One True Church” why is he so scared of the truth? Why are the Apostles of the Mormon Church suppressing the diaries and letters and early histories of Mormonism and its leaders? What, for example, could be so bad that the above mentioned William E. Berrett was grateful that he had a testimony BEFORE HE FOUND IT OUT? Most likely, Mr. Berrett would be very reluctant to tell us what Packer doesn’t want us to know. Do you get the idea that the early Mormon Leaders were not very truthful or did the kinds of things that you really wouldn’t expect a “Man of God” to do? FOR EXAMPLE: “I, therefore, as President of the Church, do hereby, in the most solemn manner, declare that ... We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice ... (Official Declaration in the Mormon scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants). Yet AFTER this “solemn” declaration was issued over half of the Mormon’s Twelve Apostles took additional wives³⁶⁵.

Do you think that it would be faith-promoting if the missionaries related the fact that Brigham Young had a whiskey still?³⁶⁶ or that he SECRETLY ordained three of his sons as apostles of the Lord, the youngest being ELEVEN YEARS OLD AT THE TIME? Or that the Prophet Joseph Smith told 15 year old Helen Kimball, daughter of Apostle Heber C. Kimball, that “If you will take this step (i.e. become one of his plural wives), it will insure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your father’s household and all of your kindred.”³⁶⁷

Or that Brigham Young freely mixed his and the Mormon Church’s funds³⁶⁸. Incidentally, this diary is one of the restricted documents that Dr. James L. Clayton mentions is no longer available even to the Mormon Church’s own historians³⁶⁹. Perhaps those restricted diaries contain much more imaginative information and descriptions of “Men on the Moon” than we already have. In any regard, it appears that Mr. Packer is, at this stage of the game, really “shutting the barn door AFTER the horse has been long gone” and in fact, in addition to making it a bit embarrassing to be a “scholar” at BYU, is also bringing MORE ATTENTION to the embarrassing history of the Mormon Church and its Leaders.

HOW CLEVER BYU PROFESSOR FOLLOWS APOSTLE’S WARNING

APOSTLE” PACKER AWARD?

If they ever give a Boyd Packer “Fool ‘em for Their Own Good” Award, Paul R. Cheesman would certainly be a contender. He gets about as much mileage from not telling the whole truth as do any of his BYU associates. Dr. Cheesman (he received his Ph.D. from BYU) held the post of “Director, *Book of Mormon* Institute” and has written several articles and books about the *Book of Mormon*. As a university professor you might expect him to be honest in his writings. But then, his job is contingent on NOT telling anything that may jeopardize the faith of either a fellow Mormon or an investigator. And he does a superb job. Essentially, his writings carry one strong theme and that is that “Archaeology is proving the *Book of Mormon* more true every day.”

FANTASTIC CLAIMS

Here are some of his own words: “The *Book of Mormon* claims of being an abridged religious history of some of the ancestors of the American Indian met early with much ‘scientific’ criticism. That may have been; just the growing pains of the science of archaeology, SINCE PRESENTLY ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS GENERALLY CONFIRM THE RECORD” (BYU Studies, Winter 1969, p. 185).

“Through archaeological discoveries alone, it is entirely possible that the *Book of Mormon* will be proven historically true....”³⁷⁰

“Today archaeologists are slowly piecing together the remains of ancient America and many fascinating cultures. These discoveries have strengthened the bold claims in the *Book of Mormon*”³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48, Winter, 1980:4.

³⁶⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, 10:206

³⁶⁷ Daniel W. Bachman, *A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith*, Master Thesis, Purdue University, December 1975, p. 151.

³⁶⁸ D. Michael Quinn, from the diary of Brigham Young’s estate’s executor, George Q. Cannon, as reported in *The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by , Yale University, May, 1976, p. 127.

³⁶⁹ op. cit. p. 40, fn 9.

³⁷⁰ *These Early Americans*, 1974, p. 2.

“However, just as archaeologists in the Near East use the Bible as a guide to search for lost Biblical cities, LDS researchers are using the *Book of Mormon* to identify where, on the American continents, the lost cities of the *Book of Mormon* might be located.”³⁷²

“Nothing has ever been found to disprove it, and ARTIFACTS COME FORTH ALMOST DAILY IN SUPPORT OF ITS HISTORICITY”³⁷³

ARE YOU IMPRESSED?

Are you impressed with Mr. Cheesman’s statements? In the same volume, in the preface, he also says “I have researched the works of as many non-Latter-day Saint scholars and archaeologists as possible... to stimulate study and reinforce the claims made within the pages of this ancient record” And if all of that doesn’t impress you, Professor Cheesman LISTS OVER 200 WORKS in his bibliography. But probably much more important is WHAT HE LEFT OUT or DIDN’T SAY concerning archaeology and the *Book of Mormon*. He stated that he “researched... as many non-Latter-day Saint scholars and archaeologists as possible”

IN SEARCH OF THE SMOKING GUN

Why do you suppose in all of his works cited above, he “overlooked” the comments of Yale Professor Michael Coe? He is not LDS. He is a “real” archaeologist. He is very familiar with the *Book of Mormon* and its claims. He is one of the “real” experts on Central American archaeology. His books include *The Maya*, rev. 1982, *In The Land Of The Olmec*, *The Archaeology of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan*, 1980, 416 pages, as well as several other recent works. WHY DIDN’T THE GOOD PROFESSOR CHEESMAN MENTION the eminently qualified archaeologist from Yale University? Probably because he would have lost his job at BYU. In a very interesting article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, NOT published by the Mormon Church, Professor Coe said: “The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, has ever shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the *Book of Mormon*, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere.... Forget the so-far fruitless quest for the Jaredites, Nephites, Mulekites, and the lands of Zarahemla and Bountiful: there is no more chance of finding them than of discovering the ruins of the bottomless pit described in the book of Revelation³⁷⁴.” “Apostle” Packer could well be proud. Don’t tell it, if it doesn’t support the Mormon Church. But wait! It gets better.

ANOTHER TRICK

In his enthusiasm to convince others of the “truthfulness” of the Mormon message, and not disturb you with the facts, consider this interesting trick of Professor Cheesman. He has known since 1962 that the “Kinderhook Plates” were claimed, in a sworn affidavit, dated in 1879, to be a fraud (See the *Improvement Era*, September, 1962, p. 658). In spite of that, he used a full page picture of a “Kinderhook Plate” in an eleven page article in *BYU Studies* titled *Ancient Writing in the Americas*³⁷⁵ as “evidence” of writing on metal plates! The plate is a fraud as claimed in the sworn affidavit in 1879. Not too surprising, he also includes a picture of the “Kinderhook Plate” on page 69 of his 1978 edition of *The World Of The Book of Mormon*.

AND STILL ANOTHER ONE

Nor is this the end of Dr. Cheesman’s manipulation of facts. One of his favorite things to do is to show a beautiful full color picture of some South or Central American ruin with a byline from the *Book of Mormon*. For example, on pages 104-105 of his 158 page volume, *Book of Mormon Lands*, this BYU “scholar” shows two very beautiful pictures of the truly breathtaking ruins of the South American city of Machu Picchu (which was inhabited in the fifteenth century). The *Book of Mormon* closes about 421 AD yet, the text that Mr. Cheesman includes next to the pictures is from Alma 8:7 which talks of cities in the *Book of Mormon* times of 82 B.C. or over 1400 years BEFORE

³⁷¹ *Book of Mormon Lands*, 1978, p. 156.

³⁷² *Pathways To The Past, A Guide To The Ruins Of Mesoamerica*. 1984, p. 16.

³⁷³ *The World Of The Book of Mormon*, 1984, pp. 201-202.

³⁷⁴ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1973, pp. 46, 48.

³⁷⁵ *BYU Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Autumn 1972, pp 80-90.

the city in the picture was one of the Incas' great centers. He uses this technique throughout many of his books, sometimes to the embarrassment of Mormon scholars interested in presenting the truth.³⁷⁶

THRILL OR DEPRESSION?

One last comment about Cheesman's "ends justifies the means" methods. In a previously quoted statement above, he stated that "artifacts come forth almost daily" in support of the *Book of Mormon*. While that's not true, a fantastic discovery was just made. "Real" archaeologists just located a 1,500 year old undisturbed Mayan burial chamber³⁷⁷. And there are two aspects of this discovery that will either thrill or depress Apostle Packer and Dr. Cheesman. FIRST, this discovery is within 150 miles of Palenque, described by Joseph Smith as a Nephite city and within the borders of Guatemala where Joseph said the city of Zarahemla stood³⁷⁸. SECOND, this burial chamber dates within 60-70 years of Moroni of the *Book of Mormon*.

Do you want to speculate on how much steel (Jarom 1:8), or barley (Alma 11:7) or writing on plates (Alma 63:12) written in "reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32), or "senums" of silver (money-Alma, 11:7) any evidence of Christianity (4 Nephi 1:1) this undisturbed tomb will reveal? No matter, Cheesman will come up with "something" for the church members. Stay tuned.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM-ANOTHER "TRANSLATION" FIASCO

Remember the remarkable translation of "Kinderhook Plates?" Well, deja vu -or here we go again. Should we pity the Mormon Leaders for their dilemma or condemn them for their hypocrisy for knowing all along one thing, but proclaiming the opposite? The evidence is CONCLUSIVE that Joseph Smith's "translation" of the Book of Abraham is false. As one Mormon writer said: "To a professional historian, for example, the recent translation of the Joseph Smith papyri may well represent the potentially most damaging case against Mormonism since its foundation. Yet the 'Powers That Be' at the Church Historian's office should take comfort in the fact that the almost total lack of response to this translation is an uncanny proof of Frank Kermode's observation that even the most devastating acts of disconfirmation will have no effect whatever on true believers."³⁷⁹

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

No discussion of LDS scripture would be complete without touching upon the Pearl of Great Price, and in particular, The Book of Abraham. The Book of Abraham, part of the Mormon Church's canonized scripture called the Pearl of Great Price, was translated by Joseph Smith from some papyrus fragments that he had purchased from a man claiming to be an Egyptologist traveling through the area with several mummies on display.

Translation? Joseph Smith papyri? What's going on here? Simply this. The Book of Abraham states at the heading above that book's chapter one that it is: "Translated from the papyrus, by Joseph Smith" and that it came "from the catacombs of Egypt...The writings of Abraham... written by his own hand, upon papyrus."

THE MUMMIES

To summarize, the "prophet Joseph Smith" came into the possession of some Egyptian mummies including two rolls of papyrus in July of 1835. In his own words: "Soon after this, some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, ... I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc."³⁸⁰ Joseph "translated" what is now The Book of Abraham from the papyrus (No one could understand Egyptian hieroglyphics until years later).

PAPYRI FOUND

³⁷⁶ See *All That Glitters: Uncovering Fools Gold in Book of Mormon Archaeology*, *Sunstone Magazine*, Jan/Feb. 1981, pp. 10-15.

³⁷⁷ See both June 4, 1984, *Time* p. 49 and *Newsweek*, p 73.

³⁷⁸ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 8, Nos. 22, 23, pp. 914-15; 927.

³⁷⁹ Klaus Hansen, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1970, p. 110.

³⁸⁰ *D.H.C.*, Vol. 2, p. 236.

It was long thought that the mummies and papyri were lost in the Chicago fire, but it turns out the papyri had been in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which presented them to the Mormon Church in November 1967. The papyri are rather common funerary text from the Egyptian “Book of Breathings” and have since been translated and bear absolutely no resemblance to Joseph’s Book of Abraham³⁸¹. By matching portions of these recently RE-discovered papyri with Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar, it can be conclusively illustrated that Joseph’s “translation” is a hoax. He had actually “translated” 76 words from ONE simple character that resembled an inverted “E”.³⁸²

Incidentally, the Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar was suppressed by the Mormon Church’s Leaders for over 125 years, and would still be “unavailable” had it not been for someone who smuggled it, and for their own reasons, made it available for publication in 1966. For the conclusive proof of this particular “translation” fraud, see *The Book of Abraham Papyrus Found*.³⁸³ For the intriguing story of how the Mormon Leaders have handled this one, see the 79 pages of *Fall of the Book of Abraham*.³⁸⁴

Using several of the facsimiles from the papyri, Joseph Smith demonstrated that these were representations of Abraham in Egypt and proceeded to then “translate” the papyri fragments into their English meanings. This was done prior to the general understanding of the Rosetta Stone decoding of the ancient Egyptian language. In a recent comparison of the papyri to Joseph’s notes, it was apparent that the 13th and 14th verses of Abraham 1 were translated from one single character resembling a backward E. Yet, in fact, Joseph Smith translated this into 76 words, with 9 proper names, and 8 other nouns. The character for the Egyptian god, Khonso, was translated by Joseph Smith into 177 words in Abraham 1:16-19.

Dealing with this issue has been a major test of faith for Mormon scholars. Three Major non-LDS Egyptologists, Klaus Baer, Richard A. Parker, and the late John A. Wilson, reviewed the fragments and all concluded that Joseph’s translation was totally incorrect and his restorations of the facsimiles were a gross injustice to the art of Egyptology.

Parker describes Facsimile number 1 as a “well-known scene from the Osiris mysteries, with Anubis, the jackal-headed god on the left, ministering to the dead Osiris on the bier. The pencilled (?) restoration (by Smith) is incorrect. Anubis should be jackal-headed. The left arm of Osiris is in reality lying at his side under him. The apparent upper hand is part of a second bird which is hovering over the erect phallus of Osiris (now broken away). The second bird is Isis and she is magically impregnated by the dead Osiris and then later gives birth to Horus who avenges his father and takes over his inheritance.”³⁸⁵

Klaus Baer basically repeats the same description, in his translation of the papyri as the “Breathing Permit of Hor.” He states, “The vignette of P. JS I is unusual, but parallels exist on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples of Egypt, the closest being the scenes in the Osiris chapels on the roof of the Temple of Dendera.” He specifically describes Facsimile 1, “There are some problems about restoring the missing parts of the body of Osiris. He was almost certainly represented as ithyphallic, ready to beget Horus, as in many of the scenes at Dendera” (Richard A. Parker, “The Joseph Smith Papyri, A Preliminary Report,” *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, page 86). In all, all three Egyptologists confirm that the Joseph Smith papyri deal exclusively with pagan rituals, pagan gods, and the Breathing Peak of Hor.

One of the most revealing and honest “in-house” appraisals of this document was published recently by Dr. Edward H. Ashment, an LDS Egyptologist working with the translation department of the LDS Church³⁸⁶.

Throughout Ashment’s Appraisal of the Facsimiles, he deals with pagan rituals and pagan gods. At no time does he make a connection to Abraham, Abraham’s God or Abraham’s religion-just paganism. While Ashment went far out of his way in softening any blows against the prophet Joseph, no one can read his work and not see the totally illiterate definitions given the pagan works by Joseph Smith³⁸⁷.

³⁸¹ See the five articles in *Dialogue: A Journal Mormon Thought*, Vol. III, No. 2, Summer 1968.

³⁸² Tanner, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, p. 322.

³⁸³ 1975, Utah Lighthouse Ministry.

³⁸⁴ *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality*, Chapter 22, pg. 294.

³⁸⁵ Vincent H. Malmstrom, *Where Time Began*, *Science Digest*, December 1981, pages 56-59, 112-113.

³⁸⁶ Klaus Baer, *The Breathing Permit of Hor*, *Dialogue*, Summer 1968, pages 109-110, 119.

³⁸⁷ Dr. Edward H. Ashment, *The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham*, *Sunstone*, Volume 4, Numbers 5 and 6, pages 33-48.

How any intelligent Mormon can hold these pornographic drawings in the Pearl of Great Price as the Sacred word of God is blasphemy and blindness at its highest.

Previously, we described the Mormon scriptures as similar to a pickup truck filled with tangled fishing line. We are still standing in that pickup truck, up to our waists, almost incomprehensibly looking all about us at the unbelievable mess. Where do we go from here? We have hardly begun to clear up the twisted ends. Our God is not the author of such confusion. May you have been far enough so that you may never doubt what Proverbs 30:6 means when it says, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." What you have seen here is an endless series of lies built upon lies, so compounded that it is an impossible task to work your way back to truth.

CHAPTER 3

PROPHECY: HOW SWIFT THE WINDS OF CHANGE BLOW!

The keystone on which the LDS church is based is not only in the "Prophet, Seer and Revelator," Joseph Smith, but in the living prophets that followed him. This should be a simple foundation to test. The Bible makes it quite clear when God's test of the prophet is given. If Joseph Smith was a true prophet then everyone should follow his teachings. If, however, Joseph Smith was a false prophet, then he should be exposed as such. There are at least twenty three references in the Bible dealing with false prophets. Some of these references are specific tests to determine if the prophet is a true prophet of God.

In order to be completely honest with ourselves and with our Mormon brethren, the authority of God's Word must be agreed upon. If we refuse to accept the holy word of God, we are forced to rely on the word of man which certainly has no eternal authority or mark of absolute truth.

The Old Testament admonitions about prophets should not be confused with the Mosaic law pertaining to hygiene, diet and cleanliness. They were not suggestions for leading a better life but laid the ground work for all prophets to come. Those throughout the Bible that spoke in God's name fulfilled, to the letter, the marching orders set forth by God.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 is the first scripture in the Bible dealing with false prophets. The issue in these verses is whether the prophet leads the people after another god. It reads:

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not harken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God..."

When the Bible speaks of "other gods" (lower case 'g') it refers to one other than the Eternal God, creator of the universe. Before we blindly follow the prophet, trusting each and every "sign and wonder", we must examine closely the god to which he claims to speak for.

The god of Mormonism was born as a baby on another world. He grew up, got baptized by one holding the proper authority, got married in the temple for time and all eternity (probably to more than one wife), had many children,

was obedient to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel and eventually died. Because of his obedience and faithfulness and by the Law of Eternal Progression he was Exalted and became god. If you know anything about Mormon doctrine you know that this is the god of Mormonism. His name is Eloheim (or Ahman) and he lives on a planet (or star) nearest the planet Kolob. He is a glorified, resurrected, exalted man having a tangible body of flesh and bones.³⁸⁸

Most assuredly, the god of Mormonism is another god as spoken of in Deuteronomy 13:2. The god of Mormonism is not the God that Christ commanded us to worship. The creator of the universe is not a glorified, resurrected, exalted man having a tangible body of flesh and bones. He is not a created being. God is Spirit, not man (John 4:24). God is a Reasoning, Purposeful, Spirit-being; Who is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Tri-Personal (yet Singular), Self-Existent, Immutable (Unchangeable), Eternal, Holy, Love, Just, and Merciful.

Now, we can't both be right. How can we determine which one of us is worshipping the wrong god? the key test is in the very next scripture dealing with false prophets in the Bible, namely Deuteronomy 18:20-22. The issue (or test) in these verses is whether the prophet speaks a thing in the name of the Lord that does not come to pass. If there is ONE SINGLE PROPHECY that Joseph Smith has proclaimed in the name of the Lord that has not come to pass and can not come to pass, then we should be able to agree that he is a false prophet. The scripture reads:

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When the prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shall not be afraid of him.”

Certain basic questions should be asked about each prophecy or revelation. First, it must be determined that the prophetic utterance really came from Joseph Smith. Secondly it must be determined that the prophecy purportedly came from God. Third, you have to determine if the prophecy came to pass exactly as outlined. Lastly, you have to determine if the prophecy can come to pass. On this last point you should ask yourself if you are being honest with yourself or are you performing mental gymnastics in order to save Joseph Smith from being a false prophet?

Caution must be used when comparing the prophecies with Mormon scripture. As mentioned earlier, some of the most glaring inconsistencies and errors have been conveniently edited out of newer editions of the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*. The offending verses were simply consigned to the Mormon “black hole” to save future embarrassment. When prophecies were recorded in earlier editions, the edition will be noted. For the most part, the prophecies exist nearly intact for to delete the false prophecies of Joseph Smith would result in the *Doctrine and Covenants* becoming more of a pamphlet than a book.

While many prophecies come from the *Pearl of Great Price* and in various letters, both public and private, the bulk of Mormon prophecy comes right out of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, held by some Mormon leaders to be the most important book of scripture in the church.

The introductory page in the Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide³⁸⁹ gives the testimony of President Joseph Fielding Smith.

In my judgement there is no book on earth yet come to man as important as the book known as the Doctrine and Covenants, with all due respect to the Book of Mormon, and the Pearl of Great Price, which we say are our standards in doctrine. The book of Doctrine and Covenants to us stands in a peculiar position above them all.

I am going to tell you why. When I say that, do not for a moment think I do not value the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the Pearl of Great Price, just as much as any man that lives; I think I do. I do not know of anybody who has read them more, and I appreciate them; they are wonderful; they contain doctrine and revelation and commandments that we should heed; but the Bible is a history containing doctrine and commandments given to the people anciently. That applies also to the Book of Mormon. It is the doctrine and history and the commandments of the people who dwelt upon this continent anciently.

³⁸⁸ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 250

³⁸⁹ *Search These Commandments*, 1984

*But this Doctrine and Covenants contains the word of God to those who dwell here now. It is our book. It belongs to the Latter-Day Saints. More precious than gold, the Prophet says we should treasure it more than the riches of the whole earth. I wonder if we do? If we value it, understand it, and know what it contains, we will value it more than wealth; it is worth more to us than the riches of the earth.*³⁹⁰

With the admonition of President Smith in mind, read the following prophecies from this book, “more precious than gold,” and decide if its value contains a measure of truth, a word missing from President Smith’s testimony. For the Bible says: “For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.” (Psalms 33:4)

The very title of the Melchizedek Priesthood manual is a commandment begging fulfillment.³⁹¹ President Heber J. Grant urged LDS members to do just that:

*I wish I had the ability to impress upon the Latter-Day Saints the necessity of searching the commandments of God, the revelations from the Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. If we as a people would live up to those wonderful revelation that have come to us, we would be a bright and shining light to all the wide world.*³⁹²

The Mormon church, it would seem is woefully lacking in Bible scholars. While their lack knowledge of the characters of the Bible is demonstrated in many areas but one area in particular comes to mind. I mention this one example as it was a revelation to me, one that resulted in deeper study of Mormon scripture for me. Thorough this study I came to the realization that the Mormon gospel was a contrivance of human origin.

*And also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days....*³⁹³

*And also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse...*³⁹⁴

On the surface this seems to be pretty straight forward. God is speaking and is giving “marching orders” to BOTH Elias and Elijah. Elias is given the keys of restoration and Elijah is given the keys of reconciliation. No problem here, right? Wrong?

The New International Dictionary of the Bible lists ELIAS as: “The Greek form of the name of the prophet ELIJAH...” We are speaking about THE SAME PERSON! To compound the problem, verse 7 notes that John the Baptist “should be filled with the Spirit of Elias.” Elias is also to “gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things.”³⁹⁵

Elias also “appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.”³⁹⁶ A Mormon might argue that Joseph was talking about the same person all along and used the Greek and Hebrew names interchangeably. Reading the next verse makes it abundantly clear that either Joseph was no Bible scholar or the Mormon God couldn’t keep his servants straight. “AFTER this vision had closed, ANOTHER great and glorious vision burst upon us; for ELIJAH the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us...”³⁹⁷

One might think that the succeeding prophets would have used time wisely and reflect on this embarrassing error. Unfortunately, the Church was not content to merely walk around with egg on their face, they compounded the error by dumping the plate into their laps. Eighty-two years passed, a time for reflection and correction. Neither was exercised. Joseph Fielding Smith, hoping to reflect Hebrews 11 and the hall of fame of the great saints, had a vision

³⁹⁰ *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:198-99

³⁹¹ *Search These Commandments* (D&C 1:37).

³⁹² in Conference Report, Oct. 1927, p. 4

³⁹³ D&C 27:6

³⁹⁴ D&C 27:9

³⁹⁵ D&C 77:9

³⁹⁶ D&C 110:12

³⁹⁷ D&C 110:13, emphasis added.

that would echo the error of Joseph Smith. “Elias who was with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration; And Malachi, the prophet who testified of the coming of Elijah...”³⁹⁸

If the prophets can’t get the great men of the Bible right, one might wonder how well they handle prophecy. One might also wonder what the Mormon reaction would be to an investigator who diligently studied the Doctrine and Covenants and came to the wrong conclusion. As you go from one prophecy to the next, bear in mind what the Mormon leadership has said regarding the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

1. OMENS OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY TO BE FULFILLED! WHEN?

Joseph Smith claimed that the angel Moroni told him that the prophecies in Isaiah, Chapter 11 were about to be fulfilled and that the prophecies in Acts 3:22-23 and Joel 2:28-32 were soon to be fulfilled³⁹⁹.

165 years have now gone by since this was received and the prophecies that Joseph Smith referred to have not been fulfilled. We know that those prophecies will be fulfilled in the future, but not in Joseph Smith’s (or Moroni’s) timing.

2. GOD FRUSTRATES THE WORK OF MAN

*Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men;*⁴⁰⁰

This particular verse is going to come back time after time and haunt Joseph Smith. If this verse is accepted as scripture by Mormons (which it is) then all we have to show is that if whatever is promised or prophesied by Joseph Smith is frustrated then it is the work of men. This verse is considered sacred scripture by Mormons; and that means that Mormons, logically, must apply it to their history and Joseph Smith’s prophecies. If Smith’s prophecies were frustrated, then those prophecies were the work of men, not of God!

They prophesy that the Lamanites will be converted⁴⁰¹. To Mormons the Lamanites are the Indians. Well, the Mormon church has been trying to convert the Indians for a century and a half and they have not done it yet. In fact a large majority of the Indians that they have converted are totally inactive. This is especially true in Latin America and South America. The Indians go in the front door and very soon go out the back door.

3. DAVID WHITMER RECORDS FURTHER FRUSTRATION

Joseph Smith sent Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery to Toronto, Canada to sell the copyright of the *Book of Mormon* in response to a revelation that he claimed to have received from God⁴⁰².

The mission and the revelation was a total failure as recorded by David Whitmer. When Joseph Smith was asked why the revelation had failed he answered that he did not know how it was. David Whitmer records that Joseph Smith

.... enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: ‘Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil’. So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or the heart of man.

Mormon Historian and Apostle B.H. Roberts records the following regarding this Toronto revelation:

... May this Toronto incident and the Prophet’s explanation be accepted and faith still be maintained in him as an inspired man, a Prophet of God? I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The revelation respecting the Toronto journey was not of God, surely; else it would not have failed; but the Prophet, overwrought in

³⁹⁸ D&C 138:45-46

³⁹⁹ September 21, 1823. *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:40-41.

⁴⁰⁰ July, 1828. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section, 3, verse 3.

⁴⁰¹ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section, 3, verses 16-20.

⁴⁰² *An Address To All Believers in Christ*, Winter 1829-1830, David Whitmer, pages 30-31

*his deep anxiety for the progress of the work, saw reflected in the 'Seer Stone' his own thought, or that suggested to him by his brother Hyrum, rather than the thought of God... in this instance of the Toronto journey, Joseph was evidently not directed by the inspiration of the Lord.*⁴⁰³

There is no way that a reasonable, rational person can escape the reality that this was a false prophecy. Remember, Deuteronomy 18:22 records that all you need is one false prophecy to have a false prophet.

4. THE HOUR IS "NIGH"

In those two verses Joseph Smith prophesied that the "... hour is nigh..." for Christ to return⁴⁰⁴.

*Were I going to prophesy, I would say the end would not come in 1844, 5 or 6, or in forty years. There are those of the rising generation who shall not taste death till Christ comes. I was once praying earnestly upon this subject, and a voice said unto me, "My son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years of age, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man." ...I prophesy in the name of the Lord God, and let it be written-the Son of man will not come in the clouds of heaven till I am eighty-five years old [48 years hence or c. 1890.]*⁴⁰⁵

169 years have gone by since Joseph Smith stated that the hour was nigh, Only by performing mental gymnastics can this prophecy be accepted as one that can be fulfilled.

Interestingly enough, this passage is taken from Smith's diary; and modern LDS "historians" have removed the phrase "48 years hence or about 1890" because it so clearly demonstrates the falsity of the prophecy.

5. NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO BOW TO LDS CHURCH

Here we are presented with a false prophecy, redolent with arrogance.

*9. Wherefore, I say unto you that I have sent unto you mine everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning. 10. And that which I have promised I have so fulfilled, and the nations of the earth shall bow to it; and, if not of themselves, thy shall come down, for that which is now exalted of itself shall be laid low of power.*⁴⁰⁶

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie makes it quite clear that the "everlasting covenant" is the gospel that has been given through the Mormon Church⁴⁰⁷. The gospel according to Mormonism is composed of all of the laws and ordinances and commandments that God has given to man.

According to verse 10 above "... the nations of the earth shall bow to it" (The Mormon Gospel). 169 years have now gone by since this revelation was received and no nation has bowed down to the Mormon gospel. And no nation has been laid low of power for not bowing down to it.

6. "ZION" IN MISSOURI, NOT UTAH!

*1. Harken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. 2. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. 3. And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence in the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse.*⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰³ *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 165.

⁴⁰⁴ September, 1830. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 29:10-11.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ March, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 49:9-10.

⁴⁰⁷ *Mormon Doctrine*, pg 529-530.

⁴⁰⁸ July, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 57:1-3.

This is a very important revelation because it names the location of the city of Zion. It is “the land of promise.” This revelation failed because, according to D&C 3.3 cited above, any work which is of God could not be frustrated. This “gathering” in Zion was really frustrated, because the Mormons tried to gather there and were physically driven out! To this day, there are few Mormons there, and actually many, many more RLDS members by far! If God was behind this revelation, then the Mormons could not have been driven out by men. If the Mormon god really meant that the “temple is lying westward,” he was correct in the direction but was off by about 950 miles!

7. FAITHFUL TO BE PRESERVED IN MISSOURI

Joseph Smith declares in this revelation that God told him that:

“... the faithful among you should be preserved and rejoice together in the Land of Missouri, I, the Lord, promise the faithful and cannot lie ” “Behold, the kingdom is yours. And Behold, and lo, I am with the faithful always. Even so. Amen.”⁴⁰⁹”

The facts are:

1. The faithful were not preserved. 2. The faithful did not rejoice together in the Land of Missouri. 3. The kingdom was not theirs they were driven out!

All you have to do is read some of the history regarding the Mormons between 1837 and 1847 and you will see that this revelation and prophecy was, and is a total failure. The least that you can say is that the prophecy was frustrated therefore indicating that it was not from God.⁴¹⁰

8. ZION SHALL FLOURISH! MISSOURI? YES!

For behold, I say unto you that Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her, and she shall be an ensign unto the people, and there shall come unto her out of every nation under heaven.”⁴¹¹

The above revelation (or prophecy) is reported by Rich to be a revelation from God that was given to Joseph Smith. Being as it is reported by a Mormon (Rich) we can assume that it is an undisputed statement of Joseph Smith.

If Zion (Independence, Missouri) has flourished, the glory of the Lord is upon it, it is an ensign unto the people and people from every nation under heaven have come to Independence it most certainly is not because of anything that the Mormons have done. As far as Mormons are concerned Independence has not flourished, the glory of the Lord is not upon it, it is not an ensign to the people and people from every nation have not gone to Independence. The least that can be said about this revelation (prophecy) is that it has been frustrated, therefore, it cannot be from God⁴¹².

Of course the Mormons would say that this prophecy will still come to pass. Only by performing mental gymnastics can this prophecy come to pass. Remember, all that has to be shown is that it was frustrated and it certainly was frustrated.

9. A RESPECTER OF CONTRADICTIONS

35. For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his dominion.”⁴¹³

If God is no respecter of persons according to Joseph Smith then why did he record the following:

⁴⁰⁹ August 13, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 62:1, 6 & 9.

⁴¹⁰ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 3, verse 3.

⁴¹¹ September 11, 1831. *Scrap Book of Mormon Literature*, by Rich, Vol. 2, p. 259.

⁴¹² *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 3, verse 3

⁴¹³ November 1, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 1:35 & 37.

20. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; 21. But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell⁴¹⁴.

The book of Moses directly contradicts the *Doctrine & Covenants*. Joseph Smith further contradicted himself when he had recorded the following:

102. Behold, I Say unto you, I have a mission in store for my servant William and my servant Hyrum, and for them alone;⁴¹⁵...

Why not Brigham or Parley or Orson? If this is not enough then let us look at verse 37 in Section 1.

37. Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

This is stating that all of the prophecies and promises that are in the *Doctrine & Covenants* are going to be fulfilled. If ever Joseph Smith uttered a false prophecy this is it. There are already listed a number of prophecies and promises that have not been fulfilled. There are a considerable number below. I believe that only an unreasonable, irrational, deluded person will not be able to see the simple truth that Joseph Smith has failed the test of a prophet according to Deuteronomy 18:22.

10. THE HOUR OF HIS COMING IS NIGH

17. For behold, the Lord God hath sent forth the angel crying through the midst of heaven saying: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight, for the hour of his coming is nigh--26. And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord; and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence. 27. And an highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. 28. Their enemies shall become a prey unto them, 29. And in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; and the parched ground shall no longer be a thirsty land. 30. And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants⁴¹⁶.

168 years have gone by and Christ has not returned. That is stretching the meaning of the word “nigh” to the breaking point; over 1,470,000 “hours” have passed! Another prophecy that has been frustrated.

11. EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

6. For unto him that receiveth it shall be given more abundantly, even power. 7. Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest. 8. Wherefore, let them bring forth their strong reasons against the Lord. 9. Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you--there is no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; 10. And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time⁴¹⁷.

To begin with the Mormons are disobeying the commandment given in verse 7. Many Christians have been asking the Mormons to meet with and talk about the doctrinal heresies of Mormonism. Few choose to honestly discuss the BASIS of their faith. I know of no person that is involved in the ministry to the Mormons that has been put to shame by any Mormon.

Many ex-Mormons are bringing our strong reasons against the doctrines of the Mormon church. Our weapon against the Mormon doctrine is the word of God as found in the Holy Bible. The weapon that we have chosen (the Bible) is prospering. There are literally hundreds (and possibly thousands) of persons that are leaving the Mormon church every month due to the fact that the foundation of Mormonism is indefensible.

⁴¹⁴ *Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 5:20 & 21

⁴¹⁵ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 124:102

⁴¹⁶ November 3, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 133:17, 26-30.)

⁴¹⁷ December 1, 1831. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section, 71:6-10

All you have to do is read a little church history (Mormon) to see that the weapons used against the Mormons did prosper. They were driven from one city to the next and finally to Salt Lake City. Certainly the guns that were used to kill Joseph Smith prospered. Only the blind and deluded will try to defend Joseph Smith in this prophecy and others that are listed above and below.

Mormons have never fulfilled this prophecy, in fact they shun it and constantly disobey it. There are over a hundred organized ministries to Mormons in the orthodox Christian church. No Mormon prophet or apostle has ever been willing to meet with these organizations, in public or in private to “confound” them. Indeed, very few Mormons of any sort will meet with them, unless they are already having doubts about the Church and want some straight answers.

Literally thousands of Mormons leave the LDS Church for Jesus, because of the impact of our Biblical witness. The convert rate per LDS missionary has dropped from a high of 7.9 converts in 1982 to 6.5 in 1987⁴¹⁸. It is evident that our weapons are prospering and that the Church is adamantly refusing to obey its own prophecy and “confound” us. Instead, it is doing its best to pretend to ignore us, an altogether different thing!

12. MORE ON “ZION, THAT BEAUTIFUL CITY OF OLD”

2. Yea the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. 3. Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased. 4. Verily, this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation. 5. For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house. 31. Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses-for the sons of Moses and also the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord, which house shall be built unto the Lord in this generation, upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed-⁴¹⁹

History records that Independence was built, but not by the Mormons. History also records that Joseph Smith dedicated the temple lot, however, it is interesting to note that the dedication ceremony was held on August 3, 1831 more that one year previous to receiving this revelation.

Verse 4 has some real problems in it. It states that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints. Whatever was built by the Mormons was built prior to the winter of 1838-1839 because the Mormons were driven out of Independence at that time. The last few words of verse 4 present the greatest problem. It states that the temple would be reared (built) in the generation then living. Verse 5 expands on this by stating that “... this generation shall not all pass away until a house shall be built unto the Lord,...”. And finally verse 31 repeats the fact that the temple would be built in the generation then living. The fact is that 168 years have gone by and the temple still has not been built. Unless a generation can be considered to be longer than 167 years then this revelation fails. Joseph Fielding Smith (who became the 10th president of the Mormon church) answered the generation question by stating that “it is reasonable to believe that no soul living 1832, is still living in mortality on the earth.”⁴²⁰

A further problem remains regarding the building of the temple. The lot is no longer owned by the Mormon church. It is now owned by the Church of Jesus Christ, Temple Lot and they plan on building their own temple. Another point of failure.

13. THE “UTTER ABOLISHMENT” OF NEW YORK AND BOSTON

114. Nevertheless, let the bishop go unto the city of New York, also to the city of Albany, and also to the city of Boston, and warn the people of those cities with the sound of the gospel, with a loud voice, of the desolation and utter abolishment which await them if they do reject these things. 115. For if they do reject

⁴¹⁸ *Saints Alive Newsletter*, April-May 1988

⁴¹⁹ September 22-23, 1832. *Doctrine & Covenants*, Sect. 84:2-5, 31

⁴²⁰ *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, p. 112

*these things the hour of their judgement is nigh, and their house shall be left unto them desolate. 119. ... For I the Lord have put forth my hand to exert the powers of heaven; ye cannot see it now, yet a little while and ye shall see it and know that I am, and that I win come and reign with my people*⁴²¹.

Now none of these cities ever listened to the LDS gospel to any measurable extent at all during Smith's lifetime—in fact, they rejected it; and even now, LDS are a small minority in these urban centers. Yet these cities never suffered “desolation and utter abolishment” for their failure to heed the LDS gospel. The prophecy failed.

Verses 114 and 115 record that the cities of New York, Albany and Boston were to be destroyed (desolation and utter abolishment) if they rejected the sound of the Mormon gospel. History records that Joseph Smith and Bishop Newell K. Whitney went to these cities in response to verses 114 and 115. There is no record of these cities ever receiving the Mormon gospel during the life of Newell K. Whitney or Joseph Smith. In fact the Mormon church is still very small in those cities. If these verses were truly from God then these cities should have been destroyed by now. This is another evidence of Joseph Smith failing as a prophet of God.

14. THE GREAT CIVIL WAR PROPHECY

*1. Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; 2. And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place. 3. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations. 4. And it shall come to pass after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war. 5. And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation. 6. And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations. 7. That the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies. 8. Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen*⁴²².

Joseph Smith received the above revelation on Christmas day, 1832. History records that the State of South Carolina was already in a state of rebellion at that time. It's not much to prophesy about something that is already happening.

It was during the Christmas season that the nation's press wrote about the impending outbreak of civil war, beginning with this rebellion in South Carolina. Even the Army was on alert. With these facts at hand, it didn't take much of a seer to predict the unfolding events. Even a paper published by the Mormons themselves contained such news!⁴²³

Mormons usually refer to the ‘Civil War’ as one of the prophecies that has been fulfilled, however, upon close examination it becomes very clear that it is a failure. I count 20 different elements of this prophecy. All 20 elements would have to come to pass in order for this prophecy to be fulfilled. If all 20 elements of the prophecy were to come to pass it would truly be remarkable. The chance of this happening without God's guiding hand would be 1 in 1,048,576. The statistics are really stacked against Joseph Smith.

History records that the Civil War did not start until April 12, 1861, when Southern artillery shelled Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. It ended four years later on April 9, 1865. The Civil War did not result in war being poured out upon all nations (verse 3). It also did not bring about a “... a full end of all nations.”

It is also interesting to note that the Civil War prophecy was not published during Joseph Smith's lifetime. It was not printed until 1851 (19 years after Joseph Smith received it).

⁴²¹ September 22-23, 1832. *D&C*, Sect. 84:2-5, 31.

⁴²² December 25, 1832. *D&C*, Section 87:1-8

⁴²³ *The Evening and Morning Star*, vol. 1, issue 8

This prophecy is covered in depth in *The Changing World of Mormonism*. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, Moody Press, and specifically on pages 424-430.

15. THE END (ALMOST) OF THE WORLD

87. For not many days hence and the earth shall tremble and reel to and fro as a drunken man; and the sun shall hide his face, and shall refuse to give light; and the moon shall be bathed in blood; and the stars shall become exceedingly angry, and shall cast themselves down as a fig that falleth from off a fig-tree⁴²⁴.

December, 1832 was a month of gloom and doom for the prophet. Two days after the “civil (or world) war” prophecy, Joseph received a revelation that the cosmos was coming unhinged.

Over 60,000 days have come and gone and the moon has not been bathed in blood, the sun has not refused to give light and the stars have not become exceedingly angry and cast themselves down. I don’t know of any way that this prophecy can be made to come true in Joseph Smith’s timing.

16. THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD?

And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes Of Israel from the north country. The people of the Lord, Those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have already commenced gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to him I am accountable for every word I say, wishing nothing worse to my fellow men than their eternal salvation; therefore, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgement is come.’ Repent ye, repent ye, and embrace the everlasting covenant and flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken, fulfilled⁴²⁵.

Almost 166 years have gone by and the wicked are still on the earth. The lost tribes have not returned from the north country (and they won’t, either). Most importantly, everyone that was alive in 1833 is now dead and the things that Joseph Smith prophesied have not come to pass.

There is no way that a reasonable, rational person can escape the reality that this is a false prophecy. Why don’t you give up on Joseph Smith and the false doctrines that he presented to the Mormon church and invite the real Jesus Christ into your heart to be your personal Lord and Saviour! You are placing your eternal salvation at risk when you continue to believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

17. THE “WORD OF WISDOM”-GOOD FOR WHATEVER AILS YOU

18. And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; 19. And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; 20. And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. 21. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen⁴²⁶.

The above prophecy was part of the revelation on the Word Of Wisdom. The promise is given that if the Mormons will obey the Word of Wisdom (no coffee, tea, tobacco, etc.) that they would obtain all of the promises in verses 13 through 21. The facts are that there are many Mormons that obey the Word of Wisdom to the letter and they have not found great treasures of knowledge or hidden treasures. They run and get weary. They walk and sometimes faint. And most certainly the destroying angel does not pass them by. Mormons die just like any other group of people.

⁴²⁴ December 27, 1832. *D&C*, Section 88:87

⁴²⁵ January 4, 1833. *History of the Church*, vol. 1. p. 315-316

⁴²⁶ February 27, 1833. *D&C*, Section 89:18-21

I think of all of the Mormons in and around Saint George, Utah that that have died from the effects of the radioactive fallout from the nuclear tests in Nevada. Why didn't the destroying angel pass them by?

On the top of page 268 of a book titled *View of the Hebrews*, written by Ethan Smith (no relation to Joseph Smith), you will find the words "...they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Of course these words can, also be found in Isaiah 40:31. While it is possible that Joseph Smith received the idea from *View of the Hebrews*, it is more likely that he got it from Isaiah because verse 20, above, includes the word and between weary and they. In the King James version of the Bible the word *and* is italicized, which means that it was not in the original manuscript. It is most interesting to note how many times Joseph Smith presents language that is supposed to have come directly from God and you find that it is an exact quotation from the Bible, including the italicized words.

18. MORE ON ZION-NEWS AT ELEVEN

*Surely Zion is the City of our God, and surely Zion cannot fail, neither be moved out of her place; for God is there and He has sworn by the power of His might to be her salvation and her high tower*⁴²⁷.

Zion did fail and Zion was moved out of her place. Zion is Independence, Missouri (see no. 6, above). The Mormons were driven out of Independence in the winter of 1838-1839. Another false prophecy.

19. HOW MUCH MORE CHASTENING CAN WE TAKE?

*13. And now I give unto you a word concerning Zion. Zion shall be redeemed although she is chastened for a little season. 15. Therefore, let your hearts be comforted; for all things shall work together for good to them that walk uprightly, and to the sanctification of the church*⁴²⁸.

165 years have gone by since this revelation was received. Can this be considered "a little season"? I think that the time has run out on this revelation, unless you want to do some etymological gymnastics with the English language.

If you were to take this revelation all by itself it wouldn't look bad, however, when you combine this revelation with all of the others that have not come to pass then the picture becomes quite clear. It seems that Joseph was determined to put all his Zion eggs in one basket. If he had prophesied the abandonment of Zion at least once, he would have been more correct than all the Zion prophecies proved him to be. In any case, Joseph Smith was a false prophet.

20. LANDS RETURNED, ENEMIES DESTROYED, HALLELUJAH!

*Therefore this is my counsel, that you retain your lands, even unto the utmost, and employ every lawful means to seek redress of your enemies; and pray to God day and night to return you in peace and safety to the lands of your inheritance; and when the judge fail you, appeal to the executive; and when the executive fail you; appeal to the president; and when the president fail you, and all things also fail you but God alone, and you continue to weary Him with your importunings, as the poor woman did the unjust judge. He will not fail you to execute judgement upon your enemies, and to avenge His own elect that cry unto Him day and night. Behold, He will not fail you. He will come with ten thousand of His Saints, and all His adversaries shall be destroyed with the breath of His lips*⁴²⁹.

The facts are these:

1. The Mormons did not retain their lands (in Missouri). 2. They did seek redress from their enemies and were turned down by everyone. 3. The Mormon god apparently did fail them because their enemies were not destroyed. 4. The enemies of the Mormon church drove them out of Missouri. 5. The above is a false prophecy.

⁴²⁷ August 2, 1833. *Parley P. Pratt Biography*, p.100; D&C 97:19.

⁴²⁸ October 12, 1833. *D&C*, Section 100:13 & 15

⁴²⁹ December 10, 1833. *History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 455

21. WE'RE MARCHING TO ZION-AGAIN

17. Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered. 18. They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion. 19. And all those things that the prophets might be fulfilled. 20. And, behold, there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints⁴³⁰.

This is almost exactly like prophesy number 18, above. The facts are that the Mormons were driven out of Zion. They were moved out of her place. This is enough to make this a false prophecy.

I believe what was happening is that the people were discouraged because of the persecutions that were being heaped upon them. These kind of statements by Joseph Smith were designed to give the people hope. They truly were suffering because of following the Mormon doctrines. Please don't make the mistake that because they were being persecuted that it is proof that the Mormon church is the true church. The Mormon leaders continually say that the persecution is evidence that the church is true. If that argument is true then the Jehovah's Witnesses must be the true church because they are being persecuted. You can also include the Unification Church (Moonies) and Christian Science and many more sects.

The persecution that the Mormons have experienced is nothing compared to the persecution that Christians in all ages have suffered. Obtain a copy of *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, edited by William Byron Forbush and published by Zondervan Publishing House. You can get it at any Christian book store.

22. THE COMING MORMON KINGDOM ON EARTH

5. But verily I say unto you, that I have decreed a decree which my people shall realize, inasmuch as they hearken from this very hour unto the counsel which I, the Lord their God, shall give unto them. 6. Behold they shall, for I have decreed it, begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour. 7. And by hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet, and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it forever and ever⁴³¹.

Mormons will say that this prophecy is a conditional prophecy. That the people were to hearken unto the counsel of God and observe all the words that God shall speak to them. With that condition the Mormons will never prevail (3. to be or prove superior in strength, power, or influence... Random House Dictionary). Mormons will never achieve anything until they are righteous and that will NEVER happen. Isaiah made it very clear why Mormons will never obtain the blessings that Joseph Smith promised them when he presented one of God's eternal truths as it relates to man. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

This prophecy can never be fulfilled because the Mormons will never become righteous. The only way that anyone can become righteous is to receive the real Jesus Christ into his/her heart and repent of the abominations of following a false god and a false christ.

23. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ZION'S CAMP?

1. Verily I say unto you, ... (presented as if from God). 13. Behold, this is the blessing which I have promised... even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established, no more to be thrown down... 15. Behold, I say unto you, the redemption of Zion must needs come by power; ... 17. For ye are the Children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm... 19. Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers: Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence 24. And inasmuch as mine enemies come against you to drive you from my goodly land, which I have consecrated to be the land of Zion, even from your own lands

⁴³⁰ December 16, 1833. *D&C*, Section 101:17-20

⁴³¹ February 24, 1834. *D&C*, Section 103:5-7

*after these testimonies, which ye have brought before me against them, ye shall curse them; 25. And whomsoever ye curse, I will curse, and ye shall avenge me of mine enemies*⁴³².

All of the above pertains to Zion's Camp. Zion's Camp was a group of Mormons that was organized to march to Missouri and rescue the Mormons there. History records that Zion's Camp was a dismal failure. The Introduction to volume 3 of the *History of the Church*, page XXXIX (and following) describes the failure of Zion's Camp.

Again, let me state that the Mormons will never prevail over anything because they will never be able to live up to the standards set by their doctrines (complete obedience to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel). Rather, I should say that many of these prophecies will never come to pass because they (the Mormons) will never be able to become righteous (or perfect).

Leaving aside for a moment the totally un-Biblical theology of all this (Jesus told us to pray for our enemies, not to curse them; and nowhere does God ask His people to avenge Him!), this is still a failed prophecy. Zion's Camp was an armed crusade of Mormons sent out by "revelation" to go to Missouri and rescue their fellow Latter-Day Saints there. Actually, the march of Zion's Camp failed miserably and so did the prophecy of God's presence going before them and cursing their enemies!

24. THE UNITED ORDER OR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ZION

*1. Verily I say unto you, my friends, I give unto you counsel, and a commandment, concerning all the properties which belong to the order which I commanded to be organized and established, to be a united order, and an everlasting order for the benefit of my church, and for the salvation of men until I come.*⁴³³

History records that the United Order failed. It was intended to be a communal type of order where everyone worked according to his ability, gave everything that he produced or earned to the Bishop's Storehouse and received from the Bishop's Storehouse according to his needs.

LDS history reveals that this "everlasting" order had to be disbanded soon after because it failed. It is obvious that today Mormons do not practice a communal approach to property. If anything, they are pro-capitalism and anti-communism. This is one of the most blatantly false prophecies of Joseph Smith.

If one were to choose a single prophecy of Joseph Smith as being false this would be it. There is no way escape the simple truth that it has failed. The least that you can say about this prophecy is that it was frustrated, therefore, it was not from God, but the work of men.⁴³⁴

25. ZION'S DESTROYER PART IV

*13. Therefore it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season, for the redemption of Zion. 14. For behold, I do not require at their hands to fight the battles of Zion; for, as I said in a former commandment, even so will I fulfil-I will fight your battles. 15. Behold, the destroyer I have sent forth to destroy and lay waste mine enemies; and not many years hence they shall not be left to pollute mine heritage, and to blaspheme my name upon the lands which I have consecrated for the gathering together of my saints.*⁴³⁵

Note that "God" says "I have (already accomplished) sent forth..." the destroyer. History shows that the enemies of the Mormons were not destroyed or laid waste. They still haven't been! The "destroyer" must be slow! (History indicates that this was a reference to Orrin Porter Rockwell; a killer who was a faithful servant of Smith and later of Brigham Young and who was sent out to kill and terrorize those who opposed the Church.) Another prophecy frustrated⁴³⁶, because the Mormons were still persecuted after this and were driven out of Zion 5 years later!

⁴³² February 24, 1834. *D&C*, Section 103:1,13,15,17,19,24 & 25

⁴³³ April 23, 1834. *D&C*, Section 104:1.

⁴³⁴ *D&C*, Section 3:3

⁴³⁵ June 22, 1834. *D&C*, Section 105:13-15.

⁴³⁶ *D&C*, Section 3:3

26. BACK TO ZION—ONE MORE TIME!

*DEAR BRETHREN-...I shall now proceed to give you such counsel as the Spirit of the Lord may dictate use every effort to gather to those regions and locate themselves, to be in readiness to move into Jackson county in two years from the eleventh of September next, which is the appointed time for the redemption, of Zion....*⁴³⁷

By September 11, 1836, the Mormons should have all been gathered in Independence, Missouri (Zion). If all of the other prophecies regarding Zion were to come true (which they didn't), they should have flourished (which they didn't), overcome their enemies (which they didn't), rejoiced together (which they didn't), lived the United Order (which failed), built a temple (which was never built), etc. etc. etc.

It is impossible for the Mormon to become exalted and become a god. The Bible makes that PERFECTLY clear. It is impossible for them to obey ALL of the laws and ordinances of the gospel according to Mormonism for the same reason. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;". Sin means missing the mark. Everyone is going to miss the mark unless they turn to the real Jesus Christ.

27. THE COMING OF THE LORD PART III

*4. And again, verily I say unto you, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and it overtaketh the world as a thief in the night.*⁴³⁸

164 years have gone by since this prophecy was given and the Lord has not returned. Does nigh really mean more than 164 years?

28. BY GOLLY, WE MUST RETURN TO ZION

*President Smith then stated that the meeting had been called, because God had commanded it; and it was made known to him by vision and by the Holy Spirit. He then gave a relation of some of the circumstances attending us while journeying to Zion our trials, sufferings: and said God had not designed all this for nothing, but He had it in remembrance yet; and it was the will of God that those who went to Zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nigh-even fifty-six years should wind up the scene.*⁴³⁹

Jesus Christ should have returned by February 14, 1891. He didn't. Another false prophecy.

It is interesting to note that Matthew 24:36 says that the exact date of Christ's coming is unknown. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." See also Mark 13:34 and Acts 1:7.

29. COUNT THE JEWISH MORMONS ONE BY ONE

*....in due time thou shall go to Jerusalem, the land of thy father, and be a watchmen unto the house of Israel; and by thy hands shall the Most high do a great work, which shall prepare the way and greatly facilitate the gathering of that people.*⁴⁴⁰

This was a prophecy given to Orson Hyde, one of the twelve apostles that Joseph Smith had chosen.

History records that Orson Hyde did go to Jerusalem. However, for those Mormons that feel that he did a great work and greatly facilitated the gathering of the Jews they are sadly mistaken. Orson Hyde dedicated Jerusalem on October 24, 1841. It took 107 years for the Jews to return. I believe I can safely say that when the Jews returned in

⁴³⁷ August 16, 1834. *History of the Church*, vol. 2, page. 145.

⁴³⁸ November 25, 1834. *D&C*, Section 106:4.

⁴³⁹ February 14, 1835. *History of the Church*, vol. 2, page 182.

⁴⁴⁰ February 14, 1835. As reported in *Prophecies of Joseph Smith and their Fulfillment*, Nephi Morris, Deseret Book Co., 1926, page 261.

1948 there was not one single Jew who had ever heard of Orson Hyde. Only by performing mental gymnastics can accept this as a true prophecy.

30. COMING OF THE LORD PART IV

16. Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.⁴⁴¹

155 years have gone by and Jesus has not returned. There was a dreadful day about 2« years later when the Mormons were driven out of Zion (Independence).

31. THE LOST TREASURE OF SALEM

1. I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey, notwithstanding your follies. 2. I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion, and many people in this city, whom I will gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion, through your instrumentality. 3. Therefore, it is expedient that you should form acquaintance with men in this city, as you shall be led, and as it shall be given you. 4. And it shall come to pass in due time that I will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it, insomuch much that they shall not discover your secret parts; and its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours. 5. Concern not yourselves about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them. 6. Concern not yourselves about Zion, for I will deal mercifully with her. 7. Tarry in this place, and in the regions round about. 8. And the place where it is my will that you would tarry, for the main, shall be signalized unto you by the peace and power of my Spirit, that shall flow unto you. 9. This place you may obtain by hire. And inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city. 10. For there are more treasures than one for you in this city. 11. Therefore, be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin; and I will order all things for your good, as fast as ye are able to receive them. Amen.⁴⁴²

This was a revelation given through Joseph Smith at Salem, Massachusetts. History records that Joseph Smith and other leaders of the Mormon church found no treasures in Salem, Massachusetts. The Mormons have never taken power over Salem. The silver and gold were not given to them by their god. If ever there was a prophecy that did not come to pass, this is it. Time has run out on Joseph again. Actually the time ran out some time in September, 1836 when Joseph Smith returned to Kirtland, Ohio without funds to pay their debts⁴⁴³. He returned with no treasure.

32. THE HECK WITH ZION, LET'S TRY OHIO!

This place (Kirtland, Ohio) must be built up, and will be built up, and every brother that will take hold and help secure these contracts (for land) shall be rich.⁴⁴⁴

This one fell with a “crash!” The Mormons were driven out of Ohio and no one became rich by helping to secure those land contracts. Ironically, most of the men who helped Smith lost their shirts and Smith himself went bankrupt because of his “funny-money” scheme in the Kirtland Anti-banking Society.⁴⁴⁵

The Mormons were driven out of Kirtland, Ohio. Nobody became rich by helping to secure the contracts for land. In fact, most of the men that helped Joseph Smith in Kirtland lost most of their money in the Kirtland anti-Banking Society. Joseph Smith himself went bankrupt. Everything about this prophetic utterance failed.

33. THOMAS, THE DOUBTER; AND THEN SOME!

⁴⁴¹ April 3, 1836. *D&C*, Section 110:16.

⁴⁴² August 6, 1836. *D&C*, Section 111:1-11.

⁴⁴³ *History Of The Church*, op. cit., 2:466

⁴⁴⁴ April, 1837. *Latter-Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, p. 488

⁴⁴⁵ *History Of The Church*, 2:467-468; see also *John Whitmer's History*, pp. 21-22; B.H. Roberts' *A Comprehensive History Of The Church*, BYU Press, 1965; 1:401,402; *Messenger and Advocate*, 3:560.

A personal prophecy was given to Thomas B. Marsh, one of the original twelve apostles. In fact he was the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when this prophecy was given about him.

3. Nevertheless, inasmuch as thou hast abased thyself thou shalt be exalted; therefore all thy sins are forgiven thee. 4. Let thy heart be of good cheer before my face; and thou shalt bear record of my name, not only unto the Gentiles, but also unto the Jew; and thou shall send forth my word unto the ends of the earth. 5. Contend thou, therefore, morning by morning; and day after day Let thy warning voice go forth; and when the night cometh let not the inhabitants of the earth slumber, because of thy speech. 6. Let thy habitation be known in Zion, and remove not thy house; for I, the Lord, have a great work for thee to do, in publishing my name among the children of men. 7. Therefore, gird up thy loins for the work, let thy feet be shod also, for thou art chosen, and thy path lieth among the mountains, and among many nations. 8. And by thy word many high ones shall be brought low, and by thy word many low ones shall be exalted. 9. Thy voice shall be a rebuke unto the transgressor; and at thy rebuke let the tongue of the slanderer cease its perverseness. 10. Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers. 11. I know thy heart, and have heard thy prayers concerning thy brethren. Be not partial towards them in love above many others, but let thy Love be for them as for thyself; and let thy love abound unto all men, and unto all who love my name. 12. And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name's sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, and be ye faithful before me unto my name....⁴⁴⁶

History records that Thomas B. Marsh was excommunicated on March 17, 1839⁴⁴⁷. Even though he was rebaptized in 1857 and died a member of the church in Utah he never did any of the things outlined in the above revelation (prophecy). He never did a great work in the church. In fact he became for many years a bitter enemy of the church. The facts are that the Mormon god did not know his heart (verse 11), otherwise he would have known that he was going to be excommunicated and fight against the church. Only by performing mental gymnastics can this prophecy be thought of as having come to pass.

Other problems with this prophecy are two-fold. First, Smith was murdered in 1844 and, second, the Lord hadn't come. That meant that the keys had to have been taken from him, or else Brigham Young would not have had them and would have been a false successor.

The Mormon might say, "Well, the promise is also to "youward," meaning the recipient of the revelation, Marsh. However, that cannot be true, because surely the Lord would have known that two years later Marsh would be excommunicated and have all keys of the priesthood stripped from him. Although Marsh did rejoin the church, he never again was an apostle nor held the "keys" that this prophecy promised he would hold until Jesus came again. So both Joseph Smith and Thomas Marsh failed to retain the keys promised.

There are additional problems with section 112. Read through the entire section and see how many additional problems you can come up with.

34. ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN, ONE GREAT LEAP FOR MANKIND.

Inhabitants of the Moon are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the Earth, being about 6 feet in height. They dress very much like the Quaker Style & are quite general in Style, or the one fashion of dress. They live to be very old; comeing (sic) generally, near a thousand years. This is the description of them as given by Joseph the Seer, and he could "See" whatever he asked the Father in the name of Jesus to see."

"As far back as 1837, I know that he said the moon was inhabited by men and women the same as this earth, and that they lived to a great. age than we do, that they live generally to near the age of 100 years.

He described the men as averaging near six feet in height, and dressing quite uniformly in something near the Quaker Style...."⁴⁴⁸

I really don't think that I need to say anything about this prophecy. The evidence is rather conclusive that Joseph Smith said it. In fact, Brigham Young confirmed it on July 24, 1870 when he said "Who can tell us of the inhabitants

⁴⁴⁶ July 23, 1837. D&C, Section 112:3-12.

⁴⁴⁷ *History of the Church*, vol. 3:284.

⁴⁴⁸ 1837. Oliver B. Huntington Journal, Book 14, original at Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Also found in *The Young Woman's Journal*, published by the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations of Zion, 1892, vol. 3, pp. 263-264.

of this little planet that shines of an evening called the moon? ... when you inquire about the inhabitants of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain.⁴⁴⁹” Do you really want to risk your eternal salvation on men who make statements like these? I don’t. I would rather place my life in the hands of Jesus Christ who said “... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6).

35. HEY DAVE, YOU CAN’T LEAVE US NOW!

*1. Verily thus saith the Lord: It is wisdom in my servant David W. Patten, that he settle up all his business as soon as he possibly can, and make a disposition of his merchandise, that he may perform a mission unto me next spring, in company with others, even twelve including himself, to testify of my name and bear glad tidings unto all the world.*⁴⁵⁰

History records that on October 27, 1838, Apostle David W. Patten was buried at Far West, Missouri⁴⁵¹.

Mormons have two responses to this. One is that Patten was actually being called on a mission to the spirit world. The verse itself contradicts that since 1) he was to go on the mission with eleven other men, none of whom were killed before spring; and 2) the verse says his mission was to “the whole world.” That could hardly be just the spirit world.

The other argument is that he wasn’t worthy of the mission so the Lord killed him. The problem with that assertion is that Joseph Smith himself proclaimed:

Brother David Patten was a very worthy man, beloved by all good men who knew him ... and died as he had lived, a man of God, and strong in the faith of a glorious resurrection ... one of his last expressions to his wife was: “whatever you do else, O! do not deny the faith.”⁴⁵²

These explanations do not hold water! The prophecy is false!

36. THE GREAT FAR WEST TEMPLE

*1. Verily thus saith the Lord 7. Let the city, Far West, be a holy and consecrated land unto me; and it shall be called most holy, for the ground upon which thou standest is holy. 8. Therefore, I command you to build a house unto me, for the gathering together of my saints, that they may worship me. 9. And let there be a beginning of this work and a foundation, and a preparatory work, this following summer; 12. Thus let them from that time forth labor diligently until it shall be finished, from the corner stone thereof unto the top thereof, until there shall not anything remain that is not finished.*⁴⁵³

160 years have gone by and the temple has not built. The cornerstone of the temple was laid on July 4, 1838 amid elaborate ceremonies⁴⁵⁴.

For 160 years the building of this temple has been frustrated, therefore it cannot be from God but from the mind of man⁴⁵⁵.

37. I GIVE YOU A MAN FOR ALL AGES: OLIVER GRANGER

12. And again, I say unto you, I remember my servant Oliver Granger; behold, verily I say unto him that his name shall be had in sacred remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever, saith the Lord.

⁴⁴⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, p 271.

⁴⁵⁰ April 17, 1838. *D&C*, Section 114:1

⁴⁵¹ *Church Chronology*, p.15.

⁴⁵² *History of the Church*, 3:170-171

⁴⁵³ April 26, 1838. *D&C*, Section 115:1, 7-9, 12.

⁴⁵⁴ *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, B.H. Roberts, page 440.

⁴⁵⁵ *D&C*, Section 3:3

*13. Therefore, let him contend earnestly for the redemption of the First Presidency of my Church, saith the Lord; and when he fails he shall rise again, for his sacrifice shall be more sacred unto me than his increase, saith the Lord. 14. Therefore, let him come up hither speedily, unto the land of Zion; and in the due time he shall be made a merchant unto my name, saith the Lord, for the benefit of my people. 15. Therefore let no man despise my servant Oliver Granger, but let the blessings of my people be on him forever and ever....*⁴⁵⁶

The facts are that it is very rare that you can find anyone in the Mormon church who has even heard of Oliver Granger. His name is supposed to be had in sacred remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever. What happened? It wasn't because he was unfaithful! History records that he was faithful. Another clear cut false prophecy in my book.

38. A PROPHET OR A DREAMER OF DREAMS?

*5. Let thine anger be kindled against our enemies; and, in the fury of thine heart, with thy sword avenge us of our wrongs. 6. Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever. 7. My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; 8. And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. 9. Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands. 10. Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression, as they did Job. 11. And they who do charge thee with transgression, their hope shall be blasted, and their prospects shall melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the burning rays of the rising sun; 12. And also that God hath set his hand and seal to change the times and seasons, and to blind their minds, that they may not understand his marvelous workings; and take them in their own craftiness 13. Also because their hearts are corrupted, and the things which they are willing to bring upon others, and love to have others suffer, may come upon themselves to the very uttermost; 14. That they may be disappointed also, and their hopes may be cut off; 15. And not many years hence, that they and their posterity shall be swept from under heaven, saith God, that not one of them is left to stand by the wall. 33. How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-Day Saints.*⁴⁵⁷

The preface to Section 121 in the 1981 edition of the *D&C* indicates that the above remarks are "Prayer and prophecies written by Joseph Smith the Prophet, while he was a prisoner in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, dated March 20, 1839."

Joseph Smith's god promised that he (and the Mormons) would triumph over all their foes. They didn't and he didn't. They had just been driven out of Zion (Independence) by their enemies. Joseph Smith was to die by the hands of his enemies in a little over 5 years. The Mormons were to be driven all the way to Utah in just 8 years. Is this what you call triumphing over your enemies?

When were the times and seasons changed (verse 12)? When were the minds of their enemies blinded (verse 12)? When were the enemies of the Mormons swept from under heaven (verse 15)? They, and their posterity? Not one of them left to stand against the wall? Ask yourself, did these things really happen? I have done a lot of studying in the past three years and I can't find any evidence of anything happening except the enemies of the Mormons overcoming them and driving them out. In spite of the fact that the Mormon god kept promising them that they would conquer their enemies. It just didn't happen.

Where is all of the knowledge that has been poured down on the heads of the Latter-Day Saints? Not the knowledge of man. The knowledge from heaven. Where are the Bible scholars? Where are the scholars in Hebrew and Greek? The Mormons as a whole are abysmally lacking in knowledge from heaven.

39. DOG CATCHER FIRED! NO MORE DOGS IN JACKSON COUNTY!

⁴⁵⁶ July 8, 1838. *D&C*, Section 117:12-15.

⁴⁵⁷ March 20, 1839. *D&C*, Section 121:5-15, 33.

*Within three years they should march to Jackson County and there should not be a dog to open his mouth against them.*⁴⁵⁸

160 years have gone by and the Mormons have not marched to Jackson County yet. They should have had their marching orders prior to 1843. They had already tried to march to Zion (Independence, Jackson County, Missouri) in 1834, and the march failed. (see 21, above) They were to move into Zion (Independence) no later than September 11, 1836 (see number 23, above). The facts are that they were driven out of Zion and have never returned. All the prophecies relating to Zion 6, 7, 8, 12, 18, 23, 24, 25 and 26 were all false and could not possibly come true.

40. THUS SAITH THE LORD: GEORGE, YOU'RE A REAL DISAPPOINTMENT!

*20. And again, verily I say unto you, my servant George Miller is without guile; he may be trusted because of the integrity which he has to my testimony I, the Lord, love him. 21. I therefore say unto you I seal upon his head the office of a bishopric, like unto my servant Edward Partridge, that he may receive the consecrations of mine house, that he may administer blessings upon the heads of the poor of my people, saith the Lord. Let no man despise my servant George, for he shall honor me.*⁴⁵⁹

*At a meeting held in the Great Salt Lake City Fort, fellowship was withdrawn from Apostle Lyman Wight and Bishop George Miller*⁴⁶⁰.

Another promise frustrated⁴⁶¹. Of course the Mormon would say that all blessings are predicated on the righteousness of the people. Let's see what the Bible says about the righteous.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:10, 23).

What does none righteous mean to you? What does all have sinned mean to you? To me it means everyone who has ever lived and will ever live. THAT'S WHY WE NEED JESUS CHRIST. Without Him we would all be lost.

41. HOW MANY GENERATIONS? ARE WE SAFE YET?

*49. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of man to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings. 50. And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.*⁴⁶²

What happened to the promises of the Mormon god that he would take care of the enemies of the saints? The above verses (49 & 50) so totally contradict so many things that the Mormon god has said in the past that I wonder what kind of a mind can accept such contradictions! The only way that a person could accept these kind of contradictions is to totally give up his mind to Satan.

42. NEW YORK? OHIO? MISSOURI? ILLINOIS? NAW, LET'S TRY IOWA!

1. What is the will of the Lord concerning the saints in the Territory of Iowa? 2. Verily, thus saith the Lord, I say unto you, if those who call themselves by my name and are essaying to be my saints, if they will do my will and keep my commandments concerning them, let them gather themselves together unto the places which I shall appoint unto them by my servant Joseph, and build up cities unto my name, that they may be prepared for that which is in store for a time to come. 3. Let them build up a city unto my name upon the land opposite

⁴⁵⁸ September 18, 1839. Reed Peck's Manuscript.

⁴⁵⁹ January 19, 1841. D&C, Section 124:20-21.

⁴⁶⁰ December 3, 1848, Church Chronology, page 36.

⁴⁶¹ D&C, Section 3:3.

⁴⁶² January 19, 1841. D&C, Section 124:49-50.

*the city of Nauvoo, and let the name of Zarahemla be named upon it. 4. And let all those who come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, that have desires to dwell therein, take up their inheritance in the same, as well as in the city of Nashville, or in the city of Nauvoo, and in all the stakes which I have appointed, saith the Lord.*⁴⁶³

What happened to Zion? It was supposed to flourish. It was not to be moved out of her place (see number <16> above). History records that Zarahemla failed, along with Nauvoo, Kirtland, Independence and every other attempt to settle until they finally arrived in Salt Lake where there was nobody to contend with for the land.

The promises of the Mormon god have been broken so many times in the past that I wonder why anyone thinks he will produce on the promise of Eternal Life. It is an empty promise.

43. A MIGHTY PEOPLE! MIGHTY WHAT?

“At Montrose, Iowa, August 6, 1842, he (Joseph Smith) uttered a remarkable prophecy, which like every other prediction from his lips has been literally fulfilled.

*“He declared the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would finally be driven to the Rocky Mountains. Many would apostatize, others would be put to death by their persecutors or lose their lives in consequence of their exile; and many of those who listened to him would live to assist in building cities and to see the Saints become a mighty people in the top of the Rocky Mountains.”*⁴⁶⁴

This is a questionable prophecy of Joseph Smith. If the Mormons want to accept it (evidence suggests that it is a forgery) they still have some problems with it. All you have to do is look at some of the statistics regarding Mormons in the Rocky Mountains to see that they are not as mighty as the public relations department of the Mormon church would have the world believe.

1. Utah has one of the highest divorce rates in the U.S. 2. Utah has a very high number of persons on welfare (when you combine the government and church numbers together it is perhaps the highest in the nation on a per capita basis). 3. Utah has one of the highest suicide rates in the nation (especially high among teenagers). 4. Utah has a very high venereal disease rate. 5. Utah has a very high percentage of marriages where the bride is pregnant at the time of the marriage. 6. Salt Lake City is known as the “Stock Fraud” capital of the U.S. 7. In spite of being the home of the Mormon church, Utah has a very high consumption of alcohol on a per capita basis. There is a very high number of women alcoholics in Utah. 8. There is a problem with drugs in Utah that would not be expected in the home of the Mormon church. 9. Counterfeiting is a problem in Utah. 10. Homosexuality and lesbianism is a real problem in Utah (and the entire Mormon church). 11. Bankruptcy is running at twice the national average in Utah.

I believe that the facts are that the Mormons are not the mighty people that the public relations department of the Mormon church would have you believe.

44. THE ASTONISHING ANSON CALL, GREAT BUILDER OF CITIES

*After drinking a draught of ice water he (Joseph Smith) said, brethren, this water tastes much like the crystal streams that are running in the Rocky Mountains which some of you will participate of. There are some of those standing here that will perform a great work in that land (pointing to Shadrack Rowndy and a number of others whom I have forgotten). There is Anson, he shall go and assist in building cities from one end of the country to the other and you shall perform as great a work as has ever been done by man, and the nations of the earth shall be astonished and many of them will be gathered in that land and assist in building cities.*⁴⁶⁵

History records that Anson Call assisted in settling Millard County, Utah, a southern semi-desert region of which Fillmore is the county seat⁴⁶⁶, the other “large” cities in that district are Delta, Hinckley, Kanosh, Leamington, Oasis and Abraham.

⁴⁶³ March, 1841. D&C, Section 125:1-4.

⁴⁶⁴ March, 1841. D&C, Section 125:1-4; (See also *History of the Church*, vol. 5: 85).

⁴⁶⁵ August 6, 1842. *Anson Call Diary*, as reprinted in *Prophecies of Joseph Smith, and Their Fulfillment*, Nephi Lowell Morris, Deseret Book Company, 1926.

⁴⁶⁶ *Church Chronology*, page 44.

Anson Call did not assist in building cities from one end of the country to the other. He did not perform as great a work as has ever been done by man. Certainly the nations of the earth are not astonished at his achievements.

Another clear cut false prophecy!

45. I WANT ALL YOU ENEMIES TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY! PLEASE!

2. for to this day has the God of my fathers delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from henceforth; for behold, and lo, I shall triumph over all my enemies, for the Lord God hath spoken it.⁴⁶⁷

Another promise that Joseph Smith would triumph over his enemies. It simply did not come to pass. Joseph Smith died at the hands of his enemies. The Mormons were driven out of every place they tried to settle.

The Mormon people and the Mormon god will never get together. The Mormon people can never reach the state of righteousness required by the Mormon god (obedience to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel) and the Mormon god will not back down on his requirement to become perfect.

46. EXALTATION: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE.

Were I going to prophesy, I would say the end (of the world) would not come in 1844, 5, or 6, or in forty years. There are those of the rising generation who shall not taste death till Christ comes.

"I was once praying earnestly upon this subject, and a voice said unto me. 'My son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years of age, thou shall see the face of the Son of Man.' I was left to draw my own conclusions concerning this; and I took the liberty to conclude that if I did live to that time, He would make His appearance. But I do not say whether He will make his appearance or I shall go where He is. I prophesy in the name of the Lord God, and let it be written--the Son of Man will not come in the clouds of heaven till I am eighty five years old."⁴⁶⁸

The preceding account is found in the Church History. Notice the changes that have been made from the account, in Joseph Smith's Diary.

... I prophesy in the name of the Lord God--& let it be written: that the Son of Man will not come in the heavens till I am 85 years old 48 years hence or about 1890....

The Mormon historians have deleted "48 years hence or about 1890".

I believe I can safely say that the rising generation came and died and Jesus has not returned (remember Matthew 24:36). He also did not come about 1890. The only way that you can escape the fact that this is a false prophecy is to perform mental gymnastics.

Another interesting thought about this prophecy. Didn't Joseph Smith claim that he had already seen the face of the Son of Man?

47. WHAT'S A POTSD, ANYWAY?

President Smith, in concluding his remarks, said that if the government, which received into its coffers the money of citizens for its public treasury, cannot protect such citizens in their lives and property it is an old granny anyhow; and I prophesy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and there will not be so much as a potsd left,⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ September 1, 1842. D&C, Section 127:2.

⁴⁶⁸ April 6, 1843. *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 336 and *Joseph Smith's Diary*, March 10, 1843--July 14, 1843.

⁴⁶⁹ May 18, 1843. *History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 394.

48. SO MUCH FOR FRIED FOODS. THEY AREN'T GOOD FOR YOU, ANYWAY.

On December 16, 1843, Joseph Smith spoke of a petition he had filed with Congress:

*While discussing the petition with Congress, I prophesied by virtue of the Holy Priesthood vested in me, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, if Congress will not hear our petition, they shall be broken up as a government, and God shall damn them and there shall be nothing left of them-not even a grease spot.*⁴⁷⁰

Fortunately for America, this prophecy was obviously never fulfilled, even though Congress refused his petition. Neither that Congress nor any other Congress has ever been “broken up” or reduced to a grease spot. It also records that Congress did not redress the wrongs committed against the Saints in the state of Missouri. There was no punishment of her officers.

157 years have gone by and Congress is still intact. The government has not been destroyed (*overthrown and wasted*). Certainly you can see that this is a false prophecy. Meanwhile, fried-food lovers everywhere need not worry about a shortage of grease.

49. MARRIAGES OF CONVENIENCE

*6. And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant (Plural Marriage), it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God. 8. Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. 12. I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment-that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord. 52. And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God. 53. For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him. 54. And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law. 62. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified. 66. And now, as pertaining this law, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you, hereafter; therefore, let this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega. Amen.*⁴⁷¹

Where do we begin? First of all, plural marriage was an “everlasting covenant” that only lasted about 50 years. It was officially done away with in 1890⁴⁷². How can something everlasting stop? Obviously false! Secondly, according to v.6, everyone who is not living in plural marriage in the LDS church is damned. That means that almost all Mormons except for 30,000 or so “fundamentalists” today (who still keep the original commandments of plural marriage) are damned!

Verse 8 states that God’s house is not a house of confusion. Amen. Mormon doctrine is so full of confusion that it cannot be from the One True God. Only a false god could create such a mass of confusion as exists in Mormonism.

Verse 12 states that “... no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law...” “This is in absolute contradiction to God’s word in Galatians 2:16 and Galatians 3:10 & 11.

Verse 53 says that Joseph Smith would be strengthened henceforth. That depends on one’s definition of “henceforth,” as he was shot dead by his enemies less than a year later. That usually doesn’t strengthen one.

Verse 54 threatens Emma Smith with destruction if she doesn’t let Joseph have all of his wives without complaint and acknowledge the divine origins of plural marriage. Emma never did these things. She fought against the plural marriage doctrine; and yet she lived to ripe old age; and Joseph was shot just months later. Emma was so opposed to

⁴⁷⁰ *The Millennial Star*, vol. 22, page 455, from *History of the Church*, 4:461.

⁴⁷¹ July 12, 1843. *D&C*, Section 132:6,8,12,52-54, 62 & 66.

⁴⁷² *D&C*, Official Declaration-1, p.291-92, Oct 6, 1890.

polygamy, that she went off with Joseph's son, Joseph Smith III and started the RLDS church, which denies that Smith ever taught polygamy. That pretty well blows that prophecy out of the water!

Verse 62 is not only contrary to God's word in the Bible but it is also contrary to Section 101 of the 1835 D&C 101:4.

...we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again....

Here we have another example of the Mormon god changing his mind.

Regarding verse 66, where is the additional information on the law of Plural Marriage that was supposed to be given to Joseph Smith? Certainly, if there was more to be revealed then it should have been revealed to one of the Presidents of the Mormon church before now.

The most that can be said for the "new and everlasting covenant of Plural Marriage" was from Satan. The very least that can be said regarding Section 132 is that it has been frustrated. Remember Section 3, verse 3?

50. WITHDRAWALS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WE ONLY TAKE DEPOSITS!

The Kirtland anti-bank was to "Swallow up all other banks."

This place [Kirtland, OH] must be built up, and will be built up, and every brother that will take hold and help secure these contracts [for land] shall be rich⁴⁷³.

The Kirtland "anti-bank" failed in the summer of 1837. This was the same year that the "anti-bank" issued \$3.00 bills. Could this have been a harbinger of thins to come.

51. I BET HARRY TRUMAN WOULD HAVE BEEN GLAD TO HEAR THAT!

The time is soon coming when no man will have any peace but in Zion (Independence, Missouri) and her Stakes⁴⁷⁴.

Over 157 years have gone by since this prophecy was uttered. Is that soon?

52. THE INDESTRUCTIBLE W. W. PHELPS.

*Joseph Smith prophesied by revelation that W.W. Phelps would not taste of death till Jesus came. Often in private and in public did Mr. Phelps boast to the saints of this blessing, given to him by revelation and prophecy through Joseph.*⁴⁷⁵

In March, 1872, the Salt Lake City papers carried the following announcement:

"PHELPS-William Wines Phelps, born in the State of New Jersey, February 1792, died March 7, 1872, in Salt Lake City, Utah."

Another false prophecy.

53. OLIVER, PLEASE GET ME SOME MORE ERASERS!

*I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, than by any other book.*⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ *Millennial Star*, 19:343; *Latter-Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, April 1837 issue, p.488.

⁴⁷⁴ *Compendium*, 1882, page 271.

⁴⁷⁵ T.B.H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints*, Shepard Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1904, p.42.

⁴⁷⁶ November 28, 1841. *History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 461.

If the *Book of Mormon* is the most correct book on earth, why have there been over 4,000 changes in it since the first edition in 1830? Copies of the 1830 edition with all of the changes marked are currently available in book stores. I have even included the 1981 change in 2 Nephi 30:6 which changed “white and delightsome” to “pure and delightsome”.

Why can't you find anything in the *Book of Mormon* about some of the essential doctrines of the Mormon church? Such as the following:

1. God has a body of flesh and bones.
2. God is an exalted man.
3. God is a product of eternal progression.
4. The plurality of Gods.
5. God “organized” the world rather than “created” it.
6. There is no eternal hell and punishment.
7. Men can become gods.
8. “Intelligences” are eternal.
9. Pre-existing spirits of man.
10. Marriage for eternity.
11. Polygamy is not an abomination in the sight of God.
12. Three degrees of glory.
13. A mother in heaven.
14. A Melchizedek priesthood consisting of the offices of elder, Seventy and High Priest.
15. An Aaronic priesthood consisting of the offices of Deacon, Teacher and Priest.
16. The functions and offices of Evangelists, Bishopricks, Stake Presidencies, Assistants to the Twelve, a First Presidency and a President of the Church.

If the *Book of Mormon* contains “.... the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;” why aren't the above doctrines found in it?

54. DID HE SAY, “TILL HELL FREEZES OVER” ?

*How long will it be before the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith will be fulfilled? He said if the Constitution of the United States were saved at all it must be done by this people. It will not be many years before those words come to pass.*⁴⁷⁷

If Joseph Smith really said the above, and I have no reason to doubt Brigham Young, then at least 155 years have gone by since Joseph Smith said it (he died in June, 1844). Of course the time element was added by Brigham Young, but he is another false prophet entirely.

SO WHAT IS THE BOTTOM LINE?

What does it mean if Joseph Smith is a false prophet? What will happen to the people who follow a false prophet's teachings? Isaiah 9:16 says the following: “For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.” Matthew 7:15-20 says to beware of false prophets. It goes on to say that the fate of a false prophet is that he will be “..hewn down, and cast into the fire..” I believe that the fate of those who follow a false prophet is that they will go right into the fire with the false prophet.

⁴⁷⁷ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 12:204.

I am so grateful that I found the REAL JESUS before it was too late for me. Oh, how I pray that each of you will find Him before it is too late. It is so very simple to receive Him into your life as your personal Lord and Savior. Revelation 3:20 says the following:

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Each of you can gain Eternal Life if you will take this step. The moment you do this you become part of the Kingdom of God. Try it! All you can lose is Eternal Damnation and all you can gain is Eternal Life.

CHAPTER 4

THE TEMPLE SACRED OR SECRET?

This subject of the temple and its rituals are, without a doubt, the most difficult part of Mormon theology to understand. It is so sacred that only one out of every four Mormons have ever participated in its ritual, so strict that only half of this select few are still worthy to go through the rites again. It is so secret that every participant must swear never to reveal its mysteries under the penalty of death.

The purpose of this chapter is not to sensationalize the beliefs of the LDS Church, nor to trivialize their doctrines. Without the reports of former Mormons, the outside world, particularly those that have been attracted to the family-oriented concepts and the expurgated narratives taught by the missionaries, all knowledge of these rites would be unknown. One of the most critical tenets of the LDS belief system is withheld from converts until they have been members for at least one year. In fact, many LDS members NEVER know what goes on in temples based on their first-hand knowledge.

Descriptions of the rituals and ceremonies in this chapter are based on the testimony of not only former Mormons but from those that were daily temple workers. The accounts given are accurate but may seem bizarre and occultic. We shall explore not only the temple rites but their origin, their concept of God, Jesus Christ and the Christian church.

The Mormon Temple is the very center of that faith. While the Prophet is the link between man and God, the Temple is the link between man and godhood! Only in it can the Mormon gain the secret knowledge that will be the key to actually stepping into godhood.

Mormon Temples are among the most beautiful buildings in existence, with no dollar spared in creating each Temple as a showplace of beauty and elegance.

There are two types of ordinances performed in the Temples: ordinances for the living, and the identical rituals done by proxy for the dead, who then have the chance to become Temple Mormons while waiting in “Spirit Prison” for the Millennium. If they choose to accept the proxy ritual, they are then allowed to go to “Paradise”, the home of all worthy Mormons who have died. The one “special” ritual for the dead is water baptism by proxy.

The Temple and its associated “unspoken blessings” are on the hearts of every member. Either they are striving to be worthy enough to go, or burdened by deep guilt of failing this worthiness, or bound by secret pride at being one of the worthy, select few.

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

The *Book of Mormon*, in an attempt to authenticate its contents relies on the testimony of “three witnesses.” We have explored the veracity of those witnesses in a prior chapter. In our revelations of the temple rituals we shall also rely on three witnesses. Only in this case, these witnesses are not only highly reliable, these were all members of the LDS church for a much longer time than the witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*. More important, they all agree with each others testimony; testimonies that are first hand, rather than by “the eyes of faith and not with the natural eyes.”⁴⁷⁸

THE FIRST WITNESS

J. Edward Decker, former Mormon and president of Saints Alive for Jesus, an LDS outreach ministry, along with Chuck Sackett, former Los Angeles temple worker, and Bill Schnoebelen, a former Mormon, Mason and member of the Church of Satan, discuss their knowledge of temple rituals, ceremonies, oaths and secret observances in this chapter.

⁴⁷⁸ Martin Harris: *The Braden & Kelly Debate*, pg. 173.

Unlike many Mormons, their hearts were reached with the truth and their eternal destinies were changed, being rescued by a loving, caring Christ. They have each dedicated their lives to witnessing Christ's love to Mormons, showing them that He, indeed, is the true Christ of the Bible and that the Mormon Christ, a created spirit brother of Satan is not the same.

Ed Decker recounts his experiences upon being considered worthy to enter the temple for the first time:

"I can remember our own excitement at being considered a worthy candidate family. We were converts and yearned to have our Christian marriage superseded by their higher, eternal one. Our children were to be "sealed" to us and we would live on in the family unit in the next life, as we stepped into 'Celestial Exaltation'.

"We were interviewed for our worthiness by the local Bishop, and upon his approval we were again interviewed by the Stake President (who oversees approximately ten Bishops). How thrilled we were to hold the small papers declaring their approval! We had our very first annual 'Temple Recommends' which we would show to gain our entrance into the Temple. We would be reviewed again each year and new 'Recommends' issued if we continued to be worthy.

"We arrived at the Temple with great anticipation. After presenting our 'Recommends,' we were led into a lobby area where we rented the special clothes we would wear through the ceremony and purchased the set of 'holy garments' we would wear home. We were then taken to the entries of the lower level dressing rooms and were separated.

"Once arriving in the dressing area, I was instructed to strip and remove all my clothing, placing a poncho-like open-sided sheet over my head. Wearing this 'shield', I was led to the Washing and Anointing Room where a Temple worker ceremonially washed and blessed each member of my body. I moved on to the next station, where another worker anointed the same parts of my body with oil, chanting the same sing-song blessings I had just received.

"I was then dressed in the 'garment of the Holy Priesthood, a basic, one-piece set of long-John underwear. The worker instructed me that I would be required to wear this 'shield and protection from the power of the destroyer' 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, except to bathe or change the garment itself."⁴⁷⁹

"The 'garment' contains special markings on each breast, the navel, and the right knee, and would act as a mystical talisman to shield me from the power of evil so long as I would wear the garment and keep the Temple oaths. What a pity that I had no understanding of the true armor of God found in Ephesians 6:10-18.

"The worker then whispered my secret 'new name', (Joseph), which only God and I would know, and by which God would call me forth from the grave. I was forbidden to tell even my wife this name, but the worker told me her 'new name', (Mary), so that I could call her forth from the grave on the morning of the first resurrection. Again, I didn't realize that every man or woman in the Temple that day received the same name or its alternate.

"Returning to my locker, I dressed in the white Temple clothing I had rented, locked my locker (?) and went upstairs to join the rest of that day's Temple 'patrons'. When I arrived at the beautiful "Endowment" Room, my wife was across the room, seated with the other women. They are not able to sit with the men during the Endowment Ceremony, and must keep their faces veiled during all prayers."⁴⁸⁰

The Endowment is actually a two-hour ceremony-drama-ritual describing man's origin, Adam's obedient step into mortality, and a series of secret signs, words, oaths and covenants necessary for each of us to finally achieve immortality and godhood. These take place in magnificently decorated muralled rooms: the Creation Room, the Garden Room, the Lone and Dreary World, the Telestial World, and ending at the critical test -the Veil Ceremony, through which each patron finally passes into the Celestial Room.

In the Creation Room, the patrons are instructed that the "garment of the Holy Priesthood" represents the garment given to Adam when he was found naked in the Garden of Eden.

⁴⁷⁹ Sackett, Chuck. *What's Going On In There?* 1982.

⁴⁸⁰ J. Ed Decker: *The Temple of the God Makers*.

It is of great importance to note that in the Biblical account Adam was not naked but wore a fig leaf apron. God rejected it as unacceptable. It was the work of Adam's own hands; his attempt to cover his own sin. God then clothed Adam and Eve in coats of skins (Genesis 3:7,21). The Lord had to shed blood to clothe them. It was the first sin and the first sin covering. The shedding of blood still is the only acceptable covering for sin to this day, except that it is now covered once and for all in Christ (Hebrews 9:12-26).

The sacred "garment" falls into the very same category as the aprons of fig leaves! Mormon theology cannot deal with either the first sin covering or the last. This basic, fatal error will appear and reappear throughout the ritual. The parallel goes even deeper. In the Garden sequence, the patrons listen as Lucifer instructs Adam and Eve that there is no other way to gain the knowledge to become as gods than to disobey Father and eat the fruit. Remember, Mormon doctrine teaches that Lucifer is the brother of Jesus and the rebellious but literal son of God.

As soon as Adam learns that the apron Lucifer is wearing symbolizes Lucifer's power and priesthoods, Lucifer instructs Adam and Eve to fashion aprons for themselves out of fig leaves. It is more than a coincidence that Lucifer's apron contains the identical Masonic Square and Compass emblems, as do the breast markings on the "garment of the Holy Priesthood" and the Temple Veil itself.

The patrons are instructed to place their own fig leaf aprons on as Lucifer also directs Adam and Eve in a representation of Genesis 3. These aprons are worn throughout the entire Endowment, and this emblem of Lucifer's covers both the "sacred garment" and pleated robes of the "Holy Priesthood". Why an apron must be worn that is the emblem of satanic power and priesthoods is never questioned by the patrons.

As the Mormon god, Elohim, comes upon the scene and discovers that Lucifer has beguiled Adam and Eve, he is shocked. This is in spite of the Mormon doctrine that Elohim knew in advance of the plan to entrap Adam into mortality.⁴⁸¹

Elohim curses Lucifer to crawl on his belly and eat dust forever, and that his head would be crushed. Lucifer arrogantly defies Elohim to his face. He promises to "reign with blood and horror on the earth." He then goes about his business and overcomes his curse, since he never changes his conduct or bodily functions. What kind of God is Elohim,, anyway? Is his son, Lucifer, that much stronger than he?

Surely this is not the God of the Holy Word! The prophet Isaiah proclaimed His power in this matter by showing that Lucifer was cast down to hell because he sought to exalt his throne above the throne of God (Isaiah 14:12-15). Lucifer was a fallen angel,, and to which angel has God ever said "Thou art my son?" (Hebrews 1:5.)

After Adam is cast out of the Garden, he builds an altar, lifts his arms above his head and calls out three times, "Oh God, hear the words of my mouth." Yet, it is Lucifer who answers and says, "I hear you, what is it you want?" Adam asks, "Who are you?" and Lucifer replies, "I am the god of this world!" How can this be? Is Lucifer the Mormon god?

SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

Look at it a little deeper. Later in the Endowment the patrons raise their arms and chant "Pay Lay Ale" three times. They are told these were the exact syllables Adam prayed. The Hebrew translation of these words can either be "marvelous false god" or "Marvelous True God." When Adam prayed, he believed what Lucifer taught, wore the apron Lucifer said was his emblem, and bore his markings upon his breast. It is no wonder Lucifer, "the god of this world" answered! Mormons often say there are many gods, but the only one they worship is the "god of this world."

Whatever the meaning of Pay Lay Ale, it is obvious that Lucifer has the authority to answer the call to "god" in the LDS Temple. When the patrons call out "Pay Lay Ale" they wear the same apron that Adam wore, bearing emblems that Lucifer had claimed to be the emblems of the priesthoods. If you are still not convinced that they pray to the false god or the true God, did you know that the chant has been changed? Until just before 1930, they chanted "Pale hale hale" or "Pale ale ale." What a coincidence! The direct Hebrew translation of "Pele Heyle!" is "Marvelous Lucifer"!⁴⁸²

When Lucifer discovers that Adam is "seeking a messenger", he interprets it to mean that Adam needs the religious instruction necessary to pass back into immortality. The Mormon Lucifer then tries to deceive Adam into receiving

⁴⁸¹ James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, pp. 55, 81.)

⁴⁸² *Strong's Concordance*, Hebrew Lexicon. Item 6382, 1966

false doctrine and training from a protestant minister who is portrayed as a dimwitted but willing hireling of Satan, ineffectively spouting what is poorly represented as true Christian theology.

The dialogue between Adam, Lucifer, and the protestant minister is significant in that it demonstrates a clear mockery and rejection of orthodoxy. Every patron who passes beyond this point must consciously reject the very fundamentals of Christianity.

“Brethren and sisters, this represents the Telestial Kingdom, or the world in which we now live.”

Adam, on finding himself in the Lone and Dreary World, builds an altar and offers prayer and these are the words he uttered:

(Adam) *“Oh God, hear the words of my mouth. Oh God, hear the words of my mouth. Oh God, hear the words of my mouth.”*

(Lucifer) *“I hear you. What is it you want?”*

(Adam) *“Who are you?”*

(Lucifer) *“I am the god of this world.”*

(Adam) *“You? The god of this world?”*

(Lucifer) *“Yes. What do you want?”*

(Adam) *“I am looking for messengers.”*

(Lucifer) *“Oh. you want someone to preach to you. You want religions do you? I will have preachers here presently.”*

(Lucifer) *“Good morning sir.”*

(Preacher) *“Good morning! A fine congregation.”*

(Lucifer) *“Yes, they are very good people. They are concerned about religion. Are you a preacher?”*

(Preacher) *“I am.”*

(Lucifer) *“Have you been to college and received training for the ministry?”*

(Preacher) *“Certainly! A man cannot preach unless he has been trained for the ministry.”*

(Lucifer) *“Do you preach-the “orthodox” religion?”*

(Preacher) *“Yes, that is what I preach.”*

(Lucifer) *“If you will preach the orthodox religion to these people and convert them, I will pay you well.”*

(Preacher) *“I will do my best.”*

(Lucifer) *“Here is a man who desires religion. He is very much exercised and seems to be sincere.”*

(Preacher) *“I understand you are inquiring after religion.”*

(Adam) *“I was calling upon Father.”*

(Preacher) *“I’m glad to know that you were calling upon Father. Do you believe in a god who is without body parts and passions? Who sits on the top of a topless throne? Whose center’s everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere? Who fills the universe and yet is so small that He can dwell in your heart? Who is*

surrounded by millions of beings who have been saved by grace, not for any act of theirs but by his good pleasure. Do you believe in this great being? “

(Adam) “I do not. I cannot comprehend such a being.”

(Preacher) “That is the beauty of it. Perhaps you do not believe in the devil, or that great hell, the bottomless pit where there is a lake of fire and brimstone into which the wicked are cast, and where they are continually burning but are never consumed.”

(Adam) “I do not believe in any such place.”

(Preacher) “My dear friend, I am sorry for you.”

(Lucifer) “I am sorry, Very, very sorry. What is it you want?”

(Adam) “I am looking for messengers from my Father.”

Adam is saved in the nick of time by Peter, James, and John, who prove they are “true messengers” by the use of a secret handshake and sign. No one seems to wonder how they came to have physical bodies several thousands of years before they were born! The patrons are exhorted by Adam to “give strict heed to their counsel and teachings and they will lead you in the way of life and salvation!”

All this is a prelude to each patron being drawn into swearing a series of special “covenants” and blood oaths that bind him/her into satanic bondage.

Several of the covenants are critical. As they prepare to covenant to obey The Law of Sacrifice, the patrons are instructed that in “the similitude of the sacrifice of Christ,” the posterity of Adam to Jesus “offered up the first fruits of the field, and the firstlings of the flock.” They are instructed that they must covenant to sacrifice all they possess, even their own lives if necessary, in sustaining and defending the kingdom of God (the LDS Church). All patrons rise and solemnly agree.

Until the summer of 1985, in Salt Lake City at the Temple Square Visitor’s Center, sat a very quiet statue. This little arrangement was perhaps the most significant display at Temple Square! It truly represented the blind depth of this Mormon heresy. It was a representation of Adam and Eve kneeling at an altar. On the altar was their offering of fruits and vegetables. A little lamb sat happily at their side. Where have you seen this type of offering before? It is the offering of CAIN, which God rejected! (Genesis 4:3-5.) It is interesting to note that the statue was replaced just AFTER the *Saints Alive* organization publicly made it a key example of the LDS heresy.

The Law of Consecration is similar. The patrons “consecrate themselves, their time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed them, or with which he may bless them, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.”

All of this is tied together by the Law of Obedience, in which the women covenant to obey their husbands and the husbands, in turn, agree to obey the “Law of Elohim” (which means to obey the Prophet and the Holy Priesthood leaders).

With the laws come a set of four secret handshakes called tokens, and their secret names, signs and penalties. While they are singularly significant in that they are identical in every sense to their Masonic counterparts through the Master Mason level, the blood oaths which accompany these eternal mysteries cannot be ignored. I must wonder how many Masons will get into the Mormon Celestial Kingdom since they know all the signs, tokens, and penalties?

The execution of the penalty for the First Token of the Aaronic Priesthood is done by placing the thumb under the left ear, the palm down and by drawing the thumb quickly across the throat to the right ear. This represents having your throat slit from ear to ear (and used to include having your tongue ripped out).

THE SURE SIGN OF THE NAIL

One of the most mystical moments of the LDS endowment is when the patron” learns the sacred words of the first and second tokens of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail and the Patriarchal Grip or Sure Sign of the Nail.

While these two tokens and their accompanying names, signs and penalties are a mystery to the Mormon, they are a revelation of the true god of worship in the Mormon temple ritual. In order to understand this, we must go back to the beginning of the Temple ceremony and watch the mystery unfold.

The execution of the penalty for the First Token of the Melchizedek Priesthood or The Sign of the Nail, is made by placing the thumb over the left hip, drawing it quickly across the body. This represents having your belly ripped open and having your bowels and intestines spewed upon the ground. Real nice stuff! Notice the two priesthoods - Aaronic and Melchizedek! Lucifer said the apron was the emblem of his power and priesthoods! This apron resembles the Masonic Past Master's apron which contains the square, compass, and the all seeing eye of Osiris.

Just moments after Lucifer tells Adam and Eve to put on aprons made of fig leaves, the temple patrons are also told to put on aprons fashioned to resemble fig leaves.

The apron signified Lucifer's power and authority. As Adam and Eve were deceived in Genesis, so also are they deceived in the temple rites.

God rejected the fig-leaf apron in Genesis; and He most certainly rejects it in the LDS endowment.

Is it not strange that Lucifer is still teaching this lie in the LDS temple? The tragedy is that the temple patrons are still putting on the aprons of Lucifer without any consideration of Bible doctrine.

Just like the apron of Lucifer, the temple garments which the patrons wear have Masonic markings—the square, compass and rule.

Researchers identify these Masonic tools as symbolic of the male and female genitals, empowered by the Master of Masons, Lucifer. This means that this “holy” underwear actually has markings which relate to pagan fertility cults!

The futility of attempting to use such abominable fetishes in an attempt to communicate with the true God is illustrated well by the fact that Adam's heartfelt prayer at the altar was answered by Lucifer.

It is not surprising that Lucifer appears to answer this prayer. Adam was using all the symbols and rites of paganism—why shouldn't Lucifer have the authority to answer? Everything Adam has done has placed him under submission to Lucifer! The true God of Israel would have no part of this kind of pagan blasphemy!

Innocent intentions don't protect you from Lucifer. Even if you think you are calling upon God, if you use satanic gestures, rites and magical garments, you're playing in Satan's ballpark, and he makes the rules.

In this context, we need to look at the words, 'Pay lay ale.' The patrons are told that these are the exact words in the Adamic language which mean, “Oh God, hear the words of my mouth” However, we should realize that these words actually invoke Lucifer, not God!

Some think it a coincidence that the word 'pale' (with a hard top on the e) in the Hebrew means 'marvelous', and the word 'ale' means 'true god or false god.' While our scholarship is questioned by some researchers as a bit sloppy regarding the meaning of the words 'pale ale', I still feel certain that this is no accident or mere coincidence.

Jerald Tanner goes to great lengths to show that 'pale ale' only means 'Oh marvelous false god' about a third of the time in its Old Testament applications, and that it means 'Oh marvelous true God!' two-thirds of the time. Considering the fact that the temple patrons are standing in a non-Christian temple wearing robes of a pagan priesthood and making occult signs and gestures, to whom is it likely that their prayers are addressed? If the true God of the Bible is not being worshipped in the temple, then that only leaves Satan! My only comment on this is that Mr. Tanner has never stood in the Temple ritual crying out those very same words as many of us have done, and who have later been shown by the Lord the very depth of our sin!

The LDS temple rite is rich in such things, but we wish to concentrate on the two highest tokens in the temple; the Sign and Sure Sign of the Nail.

Many Satanists use 'The Nail' as a special name or code word for Satan. This comes from the fact that nails caused such agony to Jesus in his last hours on Calvary. Might we not therefore wonder why in the temple rite, the two most sacred tokens refer to the Nail?

The unquestioning temple patrons are told that the name of the 'Nail' token is 'The Son', meaning 'The Son of God.' But recall that in LDS doctrine, Lucifer is one of the sons of God. While the patrons assume that they are talking about Jesus, the Son of God; in actuality, everything here points to the second son of God in Mormonism, Lucifer!

When the patrons proceed to the Veil, they give the Patriarchal Grip or SURE Sign of the Nail on the five points of fellowship. The name of this token is: "Health in the navel, marrow in the bones, strength in the loins and in the sinews, power in the priesthood be upon me and my posterity..."

The person speaking these words has now asked that the power in the priesthood be upon them and their children. The last time we heard about power and priesthood, it was from the lips of Lucifer in the Garden, in regards to his apron! Now the patron is standing in a Masonic embrace, reaching through a veil which contains slits representing the square, compass and rule, similar to the temple garment.

The implications are staggering! In spite of his good intentions, the Mormon who has gone through this has locked himself into submission to Lucifer himself! Is there any more to this secret? Is there something else that we are missing that establishes that Lucifer has his hand upon the Mormons, even if they don't realize it? What is that one missing ingredient? What does Satan fear more than anything else?

He fears the Cross of Calvary and the shed blood of Jesus! Is it any wonder that the LDS church does not use wine or even grape juice in their communion services?

What else could possibly tie into this mystic thread which has been woven through all the LDS ritual? One element that has so significantly identified Mormonism as a separate religion comes to the mind of any person who has ever seen a Mormon chapel or temple. That is the fact that there is NO CROSS! But what is on the top of their buildings?

You see stiletto-like spires on top of them. Not only is this true of their meeting houses, it is ever more obvious on their temples. Spires abound on their temples. This is especially true of the more recently-built temples like the ones in Dallas and Boise.

Now, you may say, Christian churches have spires on them. Some older churches even have three spires on them. True, but either within those churches or on top of those spires the Cross of Calvary is lifted up. The Mormon edifices shun the cross with dogmatic frenzy!

We have been told by LDS leaders that the three shorter poles of varying lengths seen in front of some chapels represent the prophet and his counselors. The spire, mounted on the tallest pole, represents their god. This reinforces the significance of the spires as something more than an architectural whim. They were deliberately placed there to invoke a mystic presence.

At least 15 of the newer temples—either built or in planning, plus the Washington DC temple and the Salt Lake temple have a special number of spires: six. Now the older Christian churches have three spires as a symbol of the Trinity. But why do LDS temples have six? It is generally understood, Biblically, that six is the number of man. Six is also related to the Beast, whose number—the "number of a man" is 666. (Rev. 13:18)

Not only that, in occult numerology, 6 is the number of the solar-phallic power of Satan! It relates to the sixth sphere of the Tree of Life, which is sacred to the witchcraft Melchizedek priesthood, the same priesthood that officiates within the LDS temple! So not only is the nail-like spire the lifting up of Satan's symbol, but even the number of spires on many temples proclaim his infernal power!

If that isn't damning enough, THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE, A MONUMENT TO A PEOPLE⁴⁸³ presents us with an extensive discussion of the temple spire architecture, and states:

"...the announcement of the impending restoration of the gospel ... was soon followed by the restoration of the priesthood. The six-tower/spire configuration is emblematic of this authority on earth and therefore presides in architectural complexity over the Temple."

These spires are not just spires! They represent something that is so dark and sinister that it makes your flesh crawl.

⁴⁸³ *University Services Corp.*, 1983, p.144

I believe those spires do indeed represent the ‘Sure Sign of the Nail’—the nickname of Satan himself, sitting enthroned atop all those churches and temples! Look at them closely the next time you drive by a Mormon temple or meeting house. You will see that they represent an upside down nail, pointing defiantly toward heaven—as if to impale the Lord Jesus anew when He comes in the clouds in glory! Many of them are four sided, just like the nails that were used in the days of Christ.

I don’t have a document that is published by the LDS church instructing the installation of nails to worship Satan in all of their temples and meeting houses. But the logic of their secret words, the satanic nickname of Lucifer, and even the slavish attention to numerology point to the fact that Satan has deceived these people and brought them into subjection through the Mormon temples which are being built throughout the world at a fantastic pace. Thus more and more Mormons are brought into submission to Lucifer, the Mormon god. Coincidence? No! It is the plan and the secret agenda of Satan!

EXECUTION OF THE PENALTY

The follow-up of each execution of a penalty is the sworn vow of the participant not to reveal what has been learned or to so suffer his life to be taken! Where in all Judeo/Christian history has there ever been any such oath except it be pagan or occultic? Jesus condemns such oaths in Matt. 5:34-37.

Can the reader even imagine the anguish experienced by some of us first-time Temple patrons? Looking for the highest point of our religious experience, we encountered unbelievable, barbaric, bloody oaths. My mind was in total chaos that first day.

THROUGH THE VEIL

The patrons finally find themselves before the Veil, which is actually a series of high, three-foot wide segments of beautiful ivory fabric. There are many segments, divided between men and women. Each segment has its “Marks of the Priesthood” which relate to the four garment marks. The key marks in both correspond to the Masonic Compass and Square, which were first revealed as key emblems on Lucifer’s apron.

A “Veil worker” represents the “Lord” behind each Veil and a Temple worker assists as each patron approaches the Veil and is tested on all that was instructed. They are told that they will someday meet the Lord exactly in this manner, and if they cannot remember all the tokens, signs, names, and penalties letter perfect, they cannot enter into his presence through the Veil. Only when the patron completes the ritual correctly is he permitted to pass through the Veil.

Isn’t it interesting that nowhere in any of these magnificent Temples is a single cross displayed, or even mentioned? The entire two hours is spent in learning the laws and ordinances by which we will be tested!

Colossians 2:14 says that Christ took the laws and ordinances that were against us, and nailed them to His cross. When Jesus said, “It is finished!” upon the cross, the Temple Veil was rent in two as the very first response to His death. Hebrews 10:20 tells us that His broken body represents the removal of the veil and is our entry into the Holiest. But the Mormons reject the cross and cannot conceive of its power (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Little else needs to be said here, except that each patron must assume the position of the “Five Points of Fellowship” with the Veil worker through the Veil. These points are (identical in Masonry): “Inside of right foot by the side of right foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back and mouth to ear!” In this absurd position the patron must chant, “Health in the navel, marrow in the bones, strength in the loins and in the sinews, power in the Priesthood be upon me and upon my posterity through all generations of time and throughout all eternity!”

Of course, this is a classic form of occultic incantation and was in use in witchcraft and Satan worship long before the Mormon Temple Ceremony came about, and is reportedly recorded in the notorious “Grimorum Verum” kept by druidic priests and warlocks. What is frightening is the calling down of the Luciferian priesthood or priestcraft upon the patron and the patron’s family for future generations, a curse that must be broken by the power of the true God!

After stepping through the Veil, families are finally united! The sealing, or marriage ceremony lasts only a few brief minutes. It is significant that this ritual has the same dark tones to it. The presiding authority, or Temple Sealer, seals upon the couple “the blessing of the kingdoms, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions and exaltations.”

The evidences of the occultic nature of Mormonism and its temple ritual are plentiful, and are profusely represented in Mormon architecture. Architects' drawings of the "Nauvoo Temple" show the Pentagram and the Five-pointed Star, with the point down and accentuated! They also appear on the Salt Lake City Temple, the entry of the New Museum of History and Art just across South Temple Street, as well as on the new statuary honoring Moroni in Manti, Utah. They are the highest satanic symbols. The inverted star stands for Satan himself, referred to as BAPHOMET, or THE GOAT OF MENDES.

The Assembly Hall, near the Salt Lake Temple, has in its center window a magic circle or Hexagram used in witchcraft for calling up demons and hexes.

The Masonic Square and Compass are EVERYWHERE, giving unmistakable proof that the early Mormon leaders were heavily influenced by Freemasonry. History gives substantial evidence of this fact. If there is ANY question as to the final position of FREEMASONRY, I suggest you acquire a copy of my booklet on this subject⁴⁸⁴.

Joseph Smith was no stranger to the occult. He "possessed his own magical Masonic medallion, or talisman, which he worked during his lifetime and which was evidently on his person when he was martyred...identified as a JUPITER TALISMAN⁴⁸⁵.

THE SECOND WITNESS

Chuck Sackett, in a booklet he wrote, called "A Mormon Temple Worker Asks Some Questions", recounts not only his experiences while working in the Los Angeles temple, but poses some interesting questions.

"As a faithful Temple participant for nearly nine years, and a Veil Worker in the Los Angeles Temple for three of those years, I have been a proxy 'Savior on Mount Zion' for approximately 150 of my deceased relatives and other persons and represented the Lord behind the veil to several hundred Temple patrons. As I received my Endowments in 1970, a year and six days after my baptism, several inconsistencies and contradictions were immediately apparent. This began to trouble me.

"I sought explanations from those in authority over me for some of the most perplexing inconsistencies. They were unable to help me, so I persisted in asking others who presumably should have known. I was never able to obtain satisfactory explanations, but in 1973 textual changes in the Endowment corrected the problem that I had pursued. While it was gratifying to see the corrections made, it did raise additional questions about the source of errors and authority for corrections. The more I learned about church doctrine the longer my list of questions grew, and the more serious their implications became. However, I allowed nothing to deter me in my dedication to the Gospel or my participation in Temple work, Missionary activities, and other church responsibilities and callings.

"As these interesting changes were made in the Endowment from time to time they seemed to go unnoticed by my brethren. This made me aware of how little attention was paid by most participants to these Sacred Ordinances in which they were participating. This troubled me even more than my questions did. I began to search the sermons and writings of LDS Prophets and General Authorities which seemed to pertain to the Endowment. Nowhere could I find reasonable explanations for the contradictions or satisfactory answers to my questions. Latter-Day revelation declares specifically that: 'The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.' (D&C 93:36), 'It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.' (D&C 131:6), and 'Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.' (D&C 130:18 & 19.) These scriptures seem to teach that continuing participation in rituals which we do not understand could be more of a detriment than a blessing to us. How can we have an intelligent understanding of the Endowment when we scarcely notice changes that are made and do not understand the reasons why? Shouldn't every faithful Saint diligently seek to understand something as important as the Endowment?

"If you are not aware of the change occurring and want to verify this fact, there are printed texts of the Endowment available which do not contain the corrections. The Tanner's "Mormonism-Shadow or Reality and Bob Witte's "What's Going on Here?" are two readily available sources.

"I invite serious LDS to study the following questions thoughtfully and to consider carefully their answers to them. To do so should increase their understanding of these the highest and most sacred of our Priesthood Ordinances,

⁴⁸⁴ Decker, J. Edward; *The Question of Freemasonry*; Saints Alive in Jesus, 1985

⁴⁸⁵ Jack Adamson, and Reed Durham, Jr.; *No Help For Widow's Son*; Martin Publishing Co., 1980. p.22.

upon which we base our aspirations of exaltation and eternal life. To facilitate mental picturing of the events and dialogue the questions are organized in sequential order concurrent with our normal progress through the Temple. Please be aware, as you read these questions, that I have carefully avoided revealing any of those elements which we consider sacred, and concerning which we have sworn oaths unto death ‘never to reveal outside of the Temple.’”⁴⁸⁶

THOSE NEEDLING QUESTIONS

1. Why are locks and keys necessary in the Temple locker rooms where only Gods and Goddesses in embryo, who have been interviewed and found worthy, are permitted to enter? Shouldn't we be trustworthy inside the Temple?
2. As proxy for the deceased person whose name we are taking through the Temple, we are clothed “in the Garment of the Holy Priesthood,” (our own garment which we took off for the washing and anointing). With it we receive the instruction: “Brother _____, having authority, I place this garment upon you for and in behalf of _____, who is dead, which you must wear throughout your life ... In as much as you do not defile it, but are true and faithful to your covenants, it will be a shield and protections to you against the power of the destroyer until you have finished your work here on the earth.” The deceased person's work here on earth is already finished, yet faithful performance to these covenants and continuous wearing of the garment is required by the instruction. Are you therefore wearing your garments throughout your life FOR ALL OF THOSE DECEASED PERSONS for whom you as proxy have performed this Ordinance? If you are not, and they cannot, then who is? If you are, then what will happen to those individuals if you defile your garments, are unfaithful, or stop wearing them? Is this an allegorical covenant? Can there be such a thing?
3. Why is the “new name” always given, and later regiven, if necessary, in such secrecy when everyone knows we all have the same “new name” (or its alternate) in every Endowment session throughout the entire day?
4. During the introduction to the Endowment the Temple initiates are extended the opportunity to withdraw, rather than to “proceed and take upon yourselves sacred covenants, the violation of which could bring upon you the judgments of God.” Yet at this time the initiates rarely have any understanding of what these Covenants are or what in general will be required of them. If this gesture of withdrawal is important and sincere, why is it not made in an appropriate way so that the initiate can make an intelligent decision? Why are not the initiates familiarized with the general nature of the covenants before they enter the temple? If this gesture is not important and sincere, why is it not eliminated from the Endowment? Doesn't this hollow gesture seem out of place?
5. In 1973 the expression, “This is simply figurative as far as the man and woman are concerned,” was added to the introduction to the Endowment after the phrase “They will create man in their own image and their own likeness.” I have never been able to discover the significance of this, why this was added, or what it means. Do you know? Do you understand it?
6. We know that Jehovah and Michael are very highly esteemed, broadly experienced and manifestly competent individuals, yet they were required to return and report to Elohim after each day of creation. Wouldn't you think that Elohim could trust them for more than one day at a time throughout the whole creation sequence? If Elohim is all-knowing, why do they have to return each day to report. If Elohim is not all-knowing, how can He be identified as the God of the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*, who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent?
7. In the Endowment Satan is depicted with a white and delightful tangible body of flesh and bone. As he picks the forbidden fruit and hands it to Eve, he pats her hand affectionately, yet we know that Satan has always been denied a tangible body of any color. According to LDS doctrine those with tangible white bodies were faithful in their first estate and are Gods in embryo. Why does the Endowment display such doctrinal error? Shouldn't it be doctrinally accurate?
8. Lucifer beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden with the promise that she would “become as God by eating of the forbidden fruit. God's promise to Adam and Eve was that they would have joy and rejoicing in their posterity if they were obedient to his Commandments. Does it seem significant to you that we are striving through our faithful Temple attendance and countless other good works to obtain the same promise which Lucifer originally used to deceive Eve; we shall become as God through our own works? Who do you suppose is being deceived now. Are you aware that millions of persons in many other religions have always held the same objective of becoming Gods?

⁴⁸⁶ Charles Sackett, *A Mormon Temple Worker Asks Some Questions*; Sword of the Shepherd Ministries, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1973.

9. As Eve ate the forbidden fruit she remembered the pre-existence, “I know thee now: thou art Lucifer! He who was cast out of Father’s presence for rebellion” -ALONG WITH acquiring a knowledge of good and evil. Why don’t Eve descendants, including ourselves, also inherit the remembrance of the pre-existence along with the knowledge of good and evil? Why did not Adam recognize Peter or Lucifer, whom he knew in the pre-existence, after eating of the same forbidden fruit as Eve? Why is Eve different than all the rest of humanity?

10. Adam’s and Eve’s fig leaf aprons were replaced by God with coats of animal skin (shedding of the animal’s blood was necessary to cover them for their transgression of the law). Why do the Saints, in the Endowment, continue to wear the obsolete green fig leaf apron, which Lucifer inspired and God rejected? Why is this apron that Adam and Eve used in their unsuccessful attempt to cover their sin and nakedness worn during the Endowment over the outside of all the other garments, including temple clothing, and the robes of the Holy Priesthood?

11. In the Bible and the Pearl of Great Price God the Father, Elohim, curses the serpent, who thereafter crawls on his belly to this day. In the Endowment, God curses Lucifer, who thereafter continues to appear throughout the Endowment in his tangible body without the effects of the curse, and unruffled in any way. Isn’t this blasphemous? Why isn’t Satan represented crawling on his belly as God commanded him to? Which should we believe: the scriptures, which are consistent with the tangible evidence; or the Endowment, which is inconsistent with itself, and contradicts the Bible (Gen. 3:14) and the Pearl of Great Price (Moses 4:20)? Shouldn’t the Endowment agree doctrinally with the scriptures?

12. In the lone and dreary world scene, immediately following their expulsion from the Garden of Eden in 4000 B.C., Adam and Eve are shown conversing with a modern day Christian minister (appearing 6000 years before his time period), who has “been to college and been trained for the ministry.” How could this possibly occur? Is this purely allegorical? Is the entire Endowment allegorical or is it historical? How may we know one from the other or what to believe?

13. If the Christian minister has “been to college, and been trained for the ministry,” why is he asking Lucifer what the devil is like, or accepting his description? Do you believe this is what Christian Seminaries really teach their students, or that they teach them nothing at all?

14. The Christian minister is portrayed as a dimwitted but willing hireling of Satan, working to lead Adam and Eve and their posterity astray with a false religion “made up of the commandments of men, mingled with scriptures.” Satan tells Peter that this false religion is “received well by all” in the congregation, indicating all of the patrons in the audience. He tells Peter that only Adam balks at these false doctrines, and Peter tacitly agrees with him. As you sit watching the Endowment, how do you feel about being classified by both parties as gullible and a potential advocate of Satan’s false religion, as taught by his hireling minister. Are you edified and uplifted by this characterization?

15. The Apostle Peter is depicted in the lone and dreary world with a body of flesh and bone shaking hands with Lucifer and giving Adam the secret grip to identify his authority, yet we know he won’t be born in the flesh and receive a body for 4000 years. Why does the Endowment display such doctrinal error?

16. In the Endowment Satan tells us as patrons that “If you don’t live up to every Covenant that you make at these altars in this Temple this day you will be in my power.” We know that the primary Covenant of the Temple was Plural Marriage, (Polygamy was the “New and Everlasting Covenant,”⁴⁸⁷ which has never been rescinded yet which no one is allowed to “live up to” today. Nor is anyone today completely to the letter living up to the revised present-day Covenants. Do you know of anyone who is? Doesn’t this mean then that we are all now in Satan’s power? Shouldn’t we be very concerned about this situation?

17. Removal of “polygamous” doctrines and Covenants from the Endowment in the 1920’s resulted in the text of the Covenant of Chastity, as administered by Peter to the patrons, indicating that the only prohibited sexual activities were with persons of the opposite sex. This was corrected in 1973 to include also today’s popular sexual perversion by deletion of a few unnecessary words. Since the Covenant, as administered for several decades to all Temple patrons, was deficient in this regard, does this mean that all of those patrons who were involved in those unspecified perversions during those years were worthy to participate in those Temple Ordinances? Did the moral requirements change in 1973? Did God really make those errors, or allow His Church to continue to make them? If God speaks to our Prophet why had six church Presidents failed to notice and connect this obvious error? Why was it the persistent questions of a newly Endowed Elder which led to the corrections finally being made?

⁴⁸⁷ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 132.

18. The church publicly proclaims its devotion to Jesus Christ and acclaims his essential roles in this earth's history and destiny. Yet after the creation scene in the Endowment Jesus, as Jehovah, is relegated to an insignificant and menial role as message carrier between Elohim who makes all decisions, and those entrusted to carry them out. Why is the role of Jesus (Jehovah) so trivial in the Endowment when compared to His essential role outside the temple in LDS doctrine? Why does omnipresent, omnipotent God need messengers and agents to accomplish His work? Why does He need them to report back on that which they have accomplished? Why must Mormon women cover their faces when they pray to God in the Temple?

19. Over the years we have been repeatedly admonished by our leaders in Salt Lake City to express vocally a substantial "Amen" at the close of all public prayers to show our accord and acceptance. In attending well over a hundred Endowments in six temples I have never heard a patron in the company respond with a vocal "Amen" to the prayer by John and those with him around the altar. Why are the practices outside and inside the temple so opposite? Is this appropriate?

20. As you watched the instructions at the veil have you ever had the jolting experience of noticing the exact same symbols on the Masonic ring of the person sitting next to you? As you watched the officiator, have you ever mentally visualized the sign in front of the local Masonic Temple? Did this give you an uneasy feeling? Are you aware that the Masonic Emblem dates back at least to the middle ages in Europe, so they could not have appropriated it from us?

21. While conversing "with the Lord through the veil" have you ever suddenly recognized "the Lord" whose arms are around you as someone you knew well enough to be appalled that they could even consider entering the temple? Isn't depressing? Those who act for the Lord behind the veil more often have the same experience.

22. A couple enters the temple on their wedding day and, after a brief chapel service, they are separated for well over three hours of preparation and Endowment ceremony. They see each other briefly at the veil and in the Celestial room, then they enter the sealing room, where they are soon separated again by an altar, over which they can reach to hold hands. They are married in this position and then kiss over the altar with difficulty. They may exchange rings, but separately, not as part of the ceremony. The same situation will be repeated each time they return to the temple, separating as they enter and not being reunited, except briefly, until they are ready to leave. This is only one of many ways the church seems to be continually separating couple, especially young marrieds. Why should this be?

23. During nine years of temple participation I often wondered whether I really wanted to become a God like "the Most High God" and to "gain thrones, dominions and principalities" over which "to rule and reign for eternity," with dozens of wives and all the rest. Do you sometimes wonder if you are really cut out for that role? If Jesus really wanted us to become Gods, why did He never mention it or even imply anything about it in the Bible, the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, or the *Pearl of Great Price*? Shouldn't we have a scriptural foundation for something this important?

24. Just where and how should we expect to use the names, signs, tokens, and penalties which we learn in the temple, and what will be the objective we accomplish with them? Can you find any scriptural justification for your opinion? Shouldn't we have a scriptural foundation for the Endowment and its purposes?

25. Throughout the Endowment Lucifer is able to defy and overcome Elohim's curse that he should crawl on his belly forever, his claim to be the "God of this earth" is unchallenged; he declared that his legions of spirits will possess the bodies which Elohim created for Adam and Eve, he is credited with responsibility for "Popes, Priests, Armies and Navies" and ruling "with blood and horror on this earth"; he is openly dedicated to thwarting Elohim's plan for this earth and all its inhabitants; he practically assures us that we are all now in his power, yet the only response Elohim makes is to cast him out of the Garden of Eden, which soon becomes deserted. Later, Peter casts Satan out of Adam's and Eve's presence, but that scene is portrayed in a very unrealistic manner. Don't you get upset seeing our adversary depicted as having such extreme power to resist and thwart God? If we are in spiritual warfare, why is Satan the only one fighting?

26. Why is the wife not permitted to know her husband's "new name?" What will happen to those wives, and their husbands, who somehow learn their husband's "new name?"

27. What will happen to a husband, and his wife/wives if he can't remember her/their "new name(s)?" What will happen to those husbands, and their wives, who deliberately forget their wives' "new names?" Can you find

scriptural or doctrinal support for the husband's responsibility to call forth his wife by her "new name", as we are instructed in the Temple at the time we are sealed to each other?

28. Joseph Smith Jr., my son, and I share the same "new name" with hundreds of thousands of other living and dead persons. When the Lord calls for "Enoch" to come forth, how will we know which Enoch He wants? How will you know who God wants when He calls your "new name"? What else do we need to make this determination? Who will provide us with it; and when? Do you understand how this will work? Shouldn't we be informed about this?

29. Joseph Smith tells us that he joined the Masonic Order on March 15, 1842, and the very next evening he was advanced to the 32nd or sublime degree⁴⁸⁸ (most competent individuals require three to five years to accomplish this). Six weeks later, on May 1, he tells us of teaching the Saints about key words, names, signs, etc. to be given in the temple. These turn out to be identical or very similar to the Masonic rituals he had just recently learned, which had been part of Masonry since circa 1600. The church still insists that Joseph Smith did not incorporate any Masonic material into the Endowment. Can you explain this situation of close timing and identical or similar symbols and wording in a reasonable and logical way other than "borrowing" from Masonic ritual for the Endowment?

30. We are each anointed to become "a King and a Priest," or "Queen and a Priestess" and to "come forth on the Morning of the First resurrection" to "inherit thrones, dominions, and principalities" over which "to rule and reign in the House of Israel forever" on our own separate world or earth. How are we ever going to be together as Eternal family units with our progenitors and our posterity in this dispersed arrangement?. Would I belong with my children or my parents, and on whose world?

31. As you perform the Temple Ordinances for your deceased relatives who rejected the LDS Gospel throughout their lifetimes, how do you reconcile your actions with the declarations of the prophets Mosiah (3:24-27), and Alma (34:31-35) and of Jesus Christ (III Nephi 27:11,17) all of whom stated there was no possibility of a second chance after death? Do you know of a later Revelation somewhere contradicting these?

32. Sisters, have you considered the stark implications of Eternal pregnancy? Is this really your greatest expectation and deserved reward? Does this appear to fulfill the Lord's promise to you in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that LABOR and are HEAVY LADEN and I will give you REST ... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light?" Will bearing spirit children be easier?

33. Brethren, have you considered the stark implications of living in eternal felicity and maintaining eternal harmony and order with scores of wives and millions of children? How well are you doing with just one wife and a few children now? Will you be a different person then or the same you? Does this seem to fulfill the Lord's promise to you in Matthew 11:28-30?

34. As you look up at the Prophet Moroni blowing his trumpet while you enter and leave the temple, do you wonder why he doesn't wear his Temple Garments, as described in J.S. 2:3? Why should he be excluded from the blessing and requirements? Will we shed our garments after the resurrection? Is the Priesthood eternal but the garments only temporary? We may conjecture that this is the situation but can you find an authoritative teaching?

35. If the past is any indication of the future, as time goes on you will probably continue to witness further changes being introduced into the Temple Ordinances. Some of these changes may be directly related to the questions you have just read. How are you going to reconcile yourself to the continuing evolution of these Sacred Priesthood Ordinances, which we have been taught are a "restoration" of anciently established ceremonies?

36. When faced with the exposure of doctrinal contradictions, changes, inconsistencies, errors and other problems, the church in recent years has shown a strong disposition to vilify and ridicule the source of exposure and carefully avoid a meaningful and honest discussion of the actual problems exposed. Will you continue to allow yourself to be distracted from confronting serious problems by this deliberately deceptive technique of avoiding honest investigation? If you decide on this choice, do you feel the Lord will condone it, and justify you in it?

37. The Saints have been admonished for more than a century to be diligent Saviors on Mount Zion; to be baptized into the church; confirmed as members of the church; ordained to the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood; washed with water, anointed with sacred oil; given a secret "new name"; clothed in the Garment of the Holy Priesthood; Endowed with names, tokens, penalties, and blood oaths of secrecy; and sealed to spouse, parents, and children for

⁴⁸⁸ *DHC*, Vol. 4 pg. 550-552; 597-599.

time and all eternity for and in behalf of those deceased individuals whose names we take through the temple each month. Have you considered how rapidly we are falling behind the increase in world population in our meager yearly accomplishments of these required Saving Ordinances? The world population increases more each week than we accomplish each year, and we have huge past civilizations completely untouched. Do you really believe that your primary activity throughout the millennium will be constantly performing these Ordinances? Is this the primary reason why so many Saints are so lax about Temple work? Do they feel they have the entire Millennium to do this work and their genealogy, so they might as well enjoy life now in other pursuits?

38. The Divine parentage of all the spirits who become the mortal descendants of Adam and Eve on this earth never is clearly established in the Endowment. However, there is an obvious implication that Adam and Eve could be the spiritual parents as well as the mortal parents of all mankind. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Elohim both declare that Eve “is the Mother of all living.” Since Eve is the mother, Adam must be the father⁴⁸⁹. At that point of creation no mankind existed on the earth except Adam and Eve, and Eve was certainly not the mother of herself and Adam. Therefore “mother of all living” logically refers to all the spirits waiting to come to this earth as Adam’s and Eve’s posterity. If Adam and Eve were the spiritual as well as the mortal parents of all humanity on this earth, then isn’t Adam our Heavenly Father? Was the now repudiated Adam God doctrine incorporated into and still retained in Endowment, as it also was publicly preached and published by early LDS Prophets?⁴⁹⁰ The historical preaching of this Adam-God doctrine by Brigham Young and his associates has become a matter of public controversy, and has been denounced in print by our present Prophet and discredited by other teachers⁴⁹¹. Therefore, should not the Endowment clearly indicate the repudiation of this defunct doctrine in our time, rather than retain an implication of its validity? Considering all the other changes that have been introduced into the Endowment in recent years, wouldn’t a change to clearly proclaim the spiritual parentage of mankind seem to be appropriate also. Why hasn’t this been done?

39. As you review these questions you will observe that I have avoided mentioning or revealing any of our Temple secrets: those secrets which we have taken death/blood oaths never to reveal outside the Temple, while we portray the execution of penalties which we describe as various “ways in which life may be taken” by making hand gestures depicting those morbid actions during the administration of the various tokens. If I had violated any of these blood oaths would you personally feel vindicated in executing the required vengeance upon me? How would you reconcile your actions with Exodus 20:13, “Thou shall not kill (murder)”? If not, what is the point in taking blood oaths, which are prohibited and condemned in Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12 (Joseph Smith and King James Versions)?

40. I have another set of questions I would also like to have answered concerning the abundant contradictions, inconsistencies, changes and the sources of the secret portions of the Endowment I have refrained from distributing them out of consideration for your feelings concerning the sacredness of these oaths, and their accompanying tokens, names, signs, and penalties. With serious and prayerful reflection I believe the Holy Spirit can help you discern many of the problems with this portion of the Temple rituals. Isn’t it worth your time and effort?

Secret oaths and covenants packaged wider elaborate and impressive but pagan-like rituals containing blood oaths of secrecy have always been identified with occultism and pagan worship. They are part of the adversaries’ plan of deception and diversion from worship of our true God. These heathen practices have been repeatedly condemned by God’s true prophets, while false priest and prophets have perpetuated them. The Apostle Paul condemned pagan rituals somewhat similar to the Endowment, and contrasts Christian worship with paganism among the gentiles where he proselyted. They believed in multiple gods, men becoming Gods, baptism for the dead and other “uniquely LDS” Are you aware that the Apostle Paul was referring to the Pagans in his resurrection sermon in I Corinthians 15. They performed baptism for the dead-not the Christians. By underlining every pronoun in this chapter you can easily recognize that Paul is referring to a non-Christian practice. The original Greek text, and Joseph Smith’s translation both agree exactly with the King James and several modern versions in this regard.

Why would God’s Prophets condemn these practices in the Bible, the *Book of Mormon* and the Pearl of Great Price, and then require his people to participate in similar ceremonies in our day? As Faithful Latter-Day Saints, we deserve to understand why we have been and are participating in these rituals, which contain so many contradictions to our own doctrines, practices, and scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ never asked anyone to participate in secret mystical rituals in bone fide scripture. Those esoteric scriptures which condone such practices have been labeled heretic since the first century. Now LDS scholars seek to legitimize them and discredit the Word of God in the Holy Bible in order to provide doctrinal support for our Temple practices.

⁴⁸⁹ Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, pg. 50-51.

⁴⁹⁰ JC, Vol. VI, pg. 50-51; V, pg. 331; VI, pg. 275, VII, pg. 290.

⁴⁹¹ *Church News*; October 9, 1976-under Priesthood Session, Adam-Who is He, M.E. Petersen.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us to understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what we are accomplishing, as quoted from sections 93:36, 131:6, and 130:18,19 in the introduction to this paper. God did not give us good minds with which to think so that we could show our obedience to Him by closing our minds about what we are doing for Him! Jesus said, “know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32) and “Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy Word is truth!” (John 17:17). He also said “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11: 18-20). If I have erred or missed something pertinent in these questions, I hope you will see fit to provide me with the information to help me understand, as I continue to “consider all things-hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21)⁴⁹².

In order to compare the testimony of our three witnesses, some of the material and observations obviously is similar, indeed, identical. As in the gospel accounts of our Lord, we are presented with similar views through different eyes. We conclude this chapter with the accounts of Bill Schnoebelen.

THE THIRD WITNESS

Bill, writing in his booklet, *Joseph Smith and the Temple of Doom*, begins with a chronology of his life which culminates with his ultimate salvation.

1. He became a Witch, 1968 2. Witch High Priest, 1973 3. Joined Church of Satan, 1975 4. Master Mason, 1976 5. Gnostic Catholic Bishop, 1978 6. Palladium Masonry, 1979 7. Master's Degree in Theology, 1980 8. Joined LDS Church, 1980 9. Went to LDS Temple 1st time, 1981 10. LDS Elders' Quorum President, 1982 11. LDS Institute Teacher, 1983 12. Received true salvation, June 22, 1984

THERE IS NOTHING COVERED THAT SHALL NOT BE REVEALED

The discussion on the origins and spiritual content of the LDS temple endowment is entering a new phase.

However LDS apologists may protest to the contrary, all fair-minded people must admit that there are far too many resemblances between the Endowment and the rituals of Freemasonry to be explained as mere coincidence. (Very briefly, the author has counted and documented some 13 UTTERLY IDENTICAL elements in the grips and signs of the endowment to Blue Lodge Masonry. Additionally, there are at least 6 elements in the rite that are so very similar as to be beyond coincidence. For complete documentation, see “Which Came First, the Serpent or the Egg” by the author, available from Aletheia Ministries; Box 3352 , Dubuque, Iowa 52001.) There is something lurking beneath the surface and we need to pull back the sheet!

Though the vast majority of Masons in the USA are probably professing Christians, it must be asserted that Freemasonry, itself, is a non-Christian religion with significant links to occultism and European Luciferianism⁴⁹³. Freemasonry is in great need of an open examination of its spiritual pedigree!

As a former Mason/Occultist, I joined the LDS Church in 1980 in the expectation that I was joining Jesus' true church. My background had led me to believe that His church would be a secret, pagan institution of great strength. It would outwardly appear very respectable and conservative, but beneath the veneer, it would actually be a reservoir of vast occult power.

My teacher, the highest ranking Witch in the USA and also a very high-level Mason, told us that the LDS church was a place prepared for witches and occultists to hide should the country's mood change to a conservative one. He told us that Mormonism had been founded by Lucifer to provide a hospitable cover where witches could hide themselves and promulgate their most cherished doctrines of spiritual evolution to godhood and a godhead which consisted of a Mother-Father pair⁴⁹⁴.

Thus we became Mormons, thinking we were following Jesus. Now as witches, we had been taught that Jesus was a Witch High Priest in the Melchizedek priesthood. Melchizedek, we are told, was a code-name for Lucifer, the Great

⁴⁹² Sackett, A Temple Worker Asks Some Questions.

⁴⁹³ J. Edward Decker, *The Question Of Freemasonry*, Free the Masons Ministries, Box 1077, Issaquah, WA 98027.

⁴⁹⁴ Margot Adler, *Drawing The Moon*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1979, p 25; and Jeffrey Russell, *A History Of Witchcraft*, Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 1980 pp. 46-51, pp. 158-159.

Initiator. Even in public print, you will often find that the occultists speak of the concept of a Melchizedek priesthood⁴⁹⁵. Achad was the favored disciple of notorious Satanist, Aleister Crowley.)

Our witch “Master” told us that the Mormon temple was an especially powerful place to go, as it had been designed to restore those ancient Masonic secrets that had been expunged from American Masonry. Indeed, he told us that there was an occult power to be had in the temple that could be achieved nowhere else an indispensable step on our path to godhood. With this in mind, we’ll proceed.

The Bible tells us that out of the mouths of two or three witnesses all things must be established. Mormons cite this scripture and believe it. Can we then go to the documents of Witchcraft, Masonry and Mormonism and establish some things? It must be borne in mind that witches and occultists are not as precise at record keeping as the LDS church. Quite the contrary! Some of their most “sacred” writings are closely guarded and unavailable to the public. Within these limitations, let us continue.

THE INITIATORY: In the LDS temple, we were clothed in a “Shield” identical to the shield used in our 2nd degree (priesthood) initiation ceremony in witchcraft, except that the LDS shield Was white and the latter black⁴⁹⁶.

THE LDS AND SATANIC ANOINTINGS WERE THE SAME

We were anointed in an identical fashion to the way witches are anointed on initiation, save that the LDS temple workers are more discreet in their anointing of intimate areas. It is a very ancient custom to anoint people to protect them from demons⁴⁹⁷. Although the book is astonishingly reductionist in its approach to Christianity, he does document the use of anointing and similar practices thoroughly among ancient people.) Modern witches do this in the belief that demons will enter through any opening of the body.

Although Mormons contend, as do witches, that their anointing is a priesthood anointing, a simple study of Old Testament practices such as described in Leviticus (8:12 ff, show that they are utterly different. Aaron is fully clothed here (vs. 7-9), so the anointing of all bodily orifices would have been impossible⁴⁹⁸.

THE GARMENT

Following the anointing of the initiates with water and oil, they are clothed in a special “Garment”, which is to be worn, 24 hours a day, under their regular clothing. It is described to the initiate as “a protection from the destroyer”. Significant to its obvious “spiritual powers” are special markings sewn in to the breasts, navel and knee.

Within the occultic rituals of witchcraft, the practice of stitching markings on garments for protection is quite commonplace⁴⁹⁹. It was immediately apparent to me that not only were the markings from witchcraft and Masonry, but they were even on the right parts of the body!

In the higher levels of Masonry and Wicca, the Square, a Masonic implement, is taught to symbolize the phallic power of the Horned God or Lucifer, a masculine deity. In contrast, the Compass, another Masonic implement, is taught to be the symbol of the “Sacred Circle’s secret point”, the Goddess or Queen of Heaven⁵⁰⁰. It will be observed that the sacred circle’s secret point is actually the womb of the high priestess representing the Goddess. This, plus the circles’ cyclicity and womb-like character make it the consummate symbol of the Queen of Heaven, and the compass her chief tool.)

Now, these male/female polarities are central to witchcraft and most pagan cults. They are also a fundamental part of Qabalism (Qabalah is a system of esoteric (hidden) Jewish mysticism that may have originated in a blend of Gnosticism and the Merkabah (“Throne of Glory”) school of Hebrew mysticism which based itself on Eze. 1. It was first written down in either Palestine or Babylon sometime between the fourth and seventh century in the *Sefer*

⁴⁹⁵ Frater Achad, *Melchizedek Truth Principles*, DeVors, Pub., London, 1973. One example of many.

⁴⁹⁶ *The Second Book Of Wisdom*, private document from Druidic witchcraft grimoire in possession of Bill Schnoebelen.

⁴⁹⁷ John Allegro, *The Sacred Mushroom And The Cross*, Doubleday & Co., 1970.

⁴⁹⁸ Gavin & Yvonne Frost, *The Witch’s Bible*, Nash Publishing, Los Angeles, 1972, pp. 80-82.

⁴⁹⁹ Paul Huson, *Mastering Witchcraft*, Putnam, 1970, pp. 155-157; Gavin Frost, *Witchcraft, The Way To Serenity*, School of Wicca, 1978, inside front cover; *Legemeton*, p. 95, DeLaurence Co., Chicago, 1914.

⁵⁰⁰ From Alexandrian/Gardnerian Rite *Book Of Shadows*, quoted in Stewart Farrar’s *What Witches Do*, Coward, McCann, and Geophegan, New York, 1971, p.93.

Yetzirah, or “Book of Creation”), especially as it is expressed in the diagram known in English as “The Tree of Life.”

This is a fundamental diagram of western magic. It expresses the occult maxim, “As above, so below.” (The Hermetic Maxim was allegedly found on an emerald tablet in Egypt, engraved by the mythic magi, Hermes Trismegistus. It forms the central linchpin of western occultism: the idea that man and God are just quantitatively different; and that a man, through his own discipline and rigorous training can become a god⁵⁰¹. This means that the Tree represents both the Universe/God and the human anatomy.

The right side of the Tree is masculine and sacred to Lucifer even as the square is stitched into the right breast of the LDS temple garment. Similarly, the left side of the Tree is feminine and so is the Compass stitched into the garment’s left breast.

If that isn’t enough, the Masonic 24 inch gauge (the symbol which seems to be over the navel on the garment) is sacred to the “Melchizedek priesthood” sphere of the tree, Tiferet, which is the central circle of the diagram and corresponds to the centre of the body.⁵⁰²

THE SECRET NAME

The final step of the Initiatory entrance into the LDS ritual is the receiving of a Sacred Name, one that only the initiate and God will know. It is the name by which God will call from the temple Mormon on the “Morning of the First Resurrection.” In the Mormon ceremony, The husband is also told his wife’s secret name so that he (not God) can raise her from the grave. She is forbidden to know his “New Name” and he forbidden to tell her.

The receiving of a secret name is also an important part of occult initiation. One principle of the magic arts is that to know a name is to have power over the one named. Thus, most Luciferian initiates will never reveal their new names to anyone. In the LDS ritual, the husband is given occultic power of spiritual bondage over his wife⁵⁰³.

THE ENDOWMENT

It must be noted that much of what is said here is most obvious where the ceremony is performed live, rather than on film. The films now in use in most temples do serve to dilute the occult impact of the endowment. I was “blessed” to see it for the first time, live, at the Salt Lake City temple.

The striking occult similarities I noted only served to confirm things my teachers had been telling me for years.

In the Salt Lake endowment (called this because it is the ritual in which you are endowed with the special knowledge and power needed to attain godhood), “Lucifer” walks in wearing the unofficial uniform of the Mormon priesthood, a black suit. He stands out in stark contrast to everyone else in the endowment, who are dressed in total white. From the standpoint of stagecraft, it definitely makes Lucifer the most important, outstanding performer. He also wears a blue apron, filled with Masonic markings, unlike the plain apron in the film version.

LUCIFER TEACHES THE DOCTRINES OF BOTH MORMONISM AND WITCHCRAFT

Lucifer proceeds to teach doctrine of both the LDS church and Wicca. After unsuccessfully tempting “Adam”, he tells “Eve” several things which are most emphatically NOT in the Genesis account crucial things!

He teaches that she must eat of the fruit because “Father” had done so before, and that was how he had gained his knowledge. The word, “Knowledge”, is significant, for it refers back directly to the dangerous heresy of Gnosticism. GNOSIS, in the Greek, means “Knowledge” and the Gnostics, like all occultists, believed that there was some secret “knowledge” available only to a select few.

⁵⁰¹ For a complete transcription of the Hermetic Maxim, see *Zolar’s Encyclopedia Of Ancient And Forbidden Knowledge*, Arco Pub., New York, 1970, p. 114.

⁵⁰² Source text: Moses de Leon’s *The Zohar* (ca. 12th century Spain); William Gray, *The Ladder Of Lights*, Samuel Weiser, 1981; Arthur E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah*, University Books, 1960; Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar*, Llewellyn Publ., Minneapolis, 1985.

⁵⁰³ Sir James Fraser, *The New Golden Bough*, Dr. Theodore Gaster, ed., Criterion Books, New York, 1959, p. 187; *Man, Myth, And Magic*, vol. 14, pp 1940-41.

This was a knowledge by which they could reach a higher plane of existence and a higher degree of salvation. Although some LDS apologists speak kindly of gnosticism and use its teachings to authenticate LDS doctrine, it was a deadly heresy plaguing the early church and condemned by the early Fathers and even in Biblical reference. (Many Bible scholars feel that John 1:1-14 is partially an anti-gnostic polemic; in that it stresses a) that Jesus is the Eternal Logos, the Word; and b) that this Logos became flesh (Greek: SARX). Scholars also identify I Tim. 6:20 and I Cor. 2:10 as possible attacks on gnostic heresy by Paul. The “Colossian Heresy” may well have been a form of Jewish gnosticism. Among the early fathers who condemned the doctrine were Irenaeus⁵⁰⁴, Clement of Alexandria⁵⁰⁵) and Tertullian⁵⁰⁶.

This teaching is the LDS doctrine called, “The Law Of Eternal Progression”, the Mormon teaching that “As man is, God once was and as God is, man may become to say nothing of the whole Adam-God controversy; which implicitly means that Brigham Young taught that God had been in the Garden of Eden with Eve and had sinned!”⁵⁰⁷ For further documentation on this, see “LDS Apostle Confesses Brigham Young Taught Adam-God Doctrine.”⁵⁰⁸ Lucifer is not finished teaching Gnostic/LDS doctrine. He tells Eve that eating the fruit is necessary to comprehend that everything has its opposite, good and evil, pleasure and pain, etc. This is pure gnosticism, found in their teaching of the celebrated Aeonic opposites, the Syzygies⁵⁰⁹. It is also LDS theology as found in the *Book of Mormon* (2 Nephi 2:11ff)

This concept finds its logical conclusion in cults like the Russian sect, The Khylisti, who taught that one had to sin every possible sin in order to repent and attain salvation, a philosophy also taught in strains of Gnostic Manicheanism⁵¹⁰.

Of course, Lucifer’s teaching that God was once a man and that our destiny is to become gods is common to virtually all forms of occult and witchcraft teaching⁵¹¹.

THE APRON

It struck me odd that there was such a staged emphasis on the apron being a symbol of Lucifer’s “power and priesthoods” during the LDS Ritual. It is said not only once but twice! Immediately following that disclosure, Lucifer instructs Adam and Eve (and all the temple patrons) to put on their own aprons. LDS defenders, to the minimal extent that they have dealt with this touchy issue protest that Lucifer’s apron looks different from the green fig leaf aprons that Adam, Eve and the temple patrons wear.

THE APRON IS THE SYMBOL OF LUCIFER’S PRIESTHOOD POWER

In light of the occultic symbolism, they miss the larger issue. The apron is THE symbol of Luciferian priesthood power in ALL satanic cults that I am familiar with. It is also worn in a myriad of forms in virtually all Masonic rites and also in many hermetic, magical lodges and Rosicrucian orders⁵¹².

Actually, the green apron worn by the LDS “patrons” is much closer to the satanic ritual original than the blue one worn by Lucifer, which is a reasonable copy of a Past Master’s apron. Green is the sacred color of Lucifer! In the groups of which I was a part, the Luciferian pontiff would no more conduct a ritual without his green apron than would a Catholic priest say Mass without his stole on!

Green Alchemically relates to the planet Venus, the “Morning Star.” Venus, we were taught, was Lucifer’s planet, being closer to the sun and therefore of a higher vibration. Copper, the metallic symbol of Venus, turns green when tarnished⁵¹³.

⁵⁰⁴ *Adversus Haereses*, late 2nd century.

⁵⁰⁵ *Stromata*, ca.215

⁵⁰⁶ Against Marcion And Against Valentinus, ca.220

⁵⁰⁷ Joseph Smith, *History Of The Church*, v.6, p.305; Journal Of Discourses, v.6, p.305; v.6, p.3, 120.

⁵⁰⁸ compiled by Jerald & Sandra Tanner, Utah Lighthouse Ministries, P.O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.

⁵⁰⁹ Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis*, T. J. Clark, Edinburg, 1983, pp. 81-82.

⁵¹⁰ *Man, Myth, And Magic*, vol. 17, p. 2338. and Steve Runciman’s *The Medieval Manichee*, Cambridge, UK, 1946, p.97.

⁵¹¹ see Rudolph, *Ibid.*, p. 92-93 for a direct relationship between ancient Gnosticism and the doctrine of eternal progression.

⁵¹² Aleister Crowley, 777, privately printed by the OTO, 1907, p.13; also *Duncan’s Ritual Monitor*, David McKay Co., New York, p.39. Rosicrucian (AMORC) member’s catalog has picture of the Rosicrucian apron.

⁵¹³ Crowley, *Ibid*, 777, p 7,11.

SECRET TOKENS AND GRIPS ARE IDENTICAL IN MORMONISM AND MASONRY

For the Mormons to quibble about apron colors is misguided, for the shape and placement of the aprons are key. The apron is designed to cover only the intimate parts of the body, thereby causing titillation for the raising of Kundalini. (Kundalini is the channeled force of sexual energy that yogis believe is coiled at the base of the spine in the Muladhara chakra. High level witches believe that this sexual power can be used to work magic and alchemy⁵¹⁴. Of course, Lucifer's apron, the Satanic apron, the LDS temple apron and the Masonic apron are all the same shape and size, with much of the very same symbols!

TOKENS AND GRIPS

Much is made of the close resemblance between the grips, tokens, penalties and signs of the priesthood in the LDS temple and their Masonic counterparts. It is definite and unmistakable! There is even more than meets the eye. In Esoteric Masonry, we were taught that the grips had significance in terms of the eastern occult practice of acupuncture, a discipline from around 2100 B.C.⁵¹⁵

Both the grip of the Nail and the Patriarchal grip involve pressure points on the acupuncture meridian for sex and circulation. Pressure on any part of this meridian would follow along all the points of the meridian to the beginning meridian points, which are, in this case, the nipples⁵¹⁶.

That's significant, since this is where two of the stitched marks are on the temple garment. It then extends over the nipple to the heart and then down to terminate at the navel. This is the place of the third Masonic stitching on the garment⁵¹⁷. The entire meridian is classified as Yang, fiery hot, which fits perfectly with the solar/phallic character of Lucifer's power and priesthoods!

The meridian point for the Patriarchal grip is designated one of acupuncture's "Great Points." It is believed to have a profound impact on psychosexual well being of a person⁵¹⁸. In the craft, we were taught that this grip awakens latent sexual energies capable of bringing to pass certain alchemical changes in the reproductive system which would lead to the grossest sort of necromancy.

This patriarchal grip is playing around with powerful occult forces. Pressure on this point (given through the veil, at the most significant point in the temple ritual) causes essential changes in one's psycho/sexual make-up.

Who can trust this ancient, pagan, methodology to do what it says it does, or could our delicate spiritual make-up be damaged by this kind of thing, even as it is by dubious practices like hypnosis?

The point in the "Sign of the Nail" is supposed to effect symptoms of convulsions, hiccoughs, and insanity⁵¹⁹. In esoteric masonry, we were taught that this grip stimulates the hatred and rage necessary to work true black magic.

Lest anyone think that I am making too much of something here, let me remind anyone who has ever been through the temple frequently how carefully the temple workers are to make certain that the actual flesh of the wrist is touched by the finger in the Patriarchal grip. If there is nothing to this, why are they so concerned that it be done with extreme exactness?

To continue in the endowment, we approach the veil and are taught the "True Order of Prayer." This was done in virtually identical fashion to the way we worked Hermetic (mental) magick in our witchcraft circles, except for the fact that in Wicca, it was not a man, but the High Priestess who was in the center of a ring, and we certainly wore a LOT less clothing. The grips, however, were identical and the alternation of male/female was the same⁵²⁰.

⁵¹⁴ Douglas and Singer, *Sexual Secrets*, Destiny Books, New York, 1979, pp. 182, 71-72, 43-46.

⁵¹⁵ Lo Chi Kwong, *Acupuncture In Clinical Practice*, Commercial Press Ltd., Hong Kong, 1979, p.1

⁵¹⁶ John F. Thie, D.C. *Touch For Health*, DeVros and Co, Marina del Rey, CA. 1979, pp. 70-77; *The Textbook Of Acupuncture Therapy* by Dr. Mary Austin, ASI Pub., New York, 1978, pp. 43-47.

⁵¹⁷ Kwong, *Ibid*, p.68-69

⁵¹⁸ Austin, *Ibid*., p.44.

⁵¹⁹ Kwong, *Ibid*., p.66

⁵²⁰ Farrar *What Witches Do*, pg. 20, 26.

THE VEIL is a concept central to occultism. The Tree of Life, mentioned above, is also a pattern for the levels of initiate degrees in magic. As one progresses above 1st degree, he or she becomes more and more “godlike” until finally one hits the 7th degree. To progress beyond that point, you must pass through the veil into what is called the “Supernal Triad” of the Tree, the top three spheres. Past the veil, you have the ability to become a god or goddess. Imagine that!

Similarly, in masonry, the initiate must pass through the three “chambers” of King Solomon’s temple, each one corresponding to a degree. These three chambers are similar to the three triads in the Tree of Life and the three floors in the old Mormon temples and three degrees of glory. When the Mason reaches the third degree he must enter the “Holy of Holies” of King Solomon’s temple which, again, had a veil before it.

Once a Master Mason, the candidate has the opportunity to become a god. Although most Masons in England and the U.S. are unaware of this, the esoteric degrees make man’s godlike potential quite plain. Any temple Mormon will instantly recognize profound similarities between the schemata of the Tree of Life, the Masonic Temple, and the three levels of glory represented in the LDS temple. The resemblance is a bit too startling to be mere coincidence.

Ancient gnosticism rears its ugly head here; for the Gnostics taught that there were also three levels of destiny for men. They are the Hylics or material ones, the Psychics or the soulish ones (both being under bondage to the lower powers) and finally the elite Pneumatics, who had the divine spark of the Logos within them. Sounds an awful lot like the way the Mormons believe things are going to end up, doesn’t it?

“THE SIGN OF THE NAIL” This grip was identical to the highest grip that I had learned in Luciferianism; as well as the grip of the Knights of Malta degree⁵²¹. Satan, you see, is often referred to among high level witches and Satanists by the guarded code word: “The Nail.” This title comes from the fact that nails caused so much pain to the Savior. This is why the grip is so highly regarded in Luciferian circles. (A “code word”, by its nature, is zealously guarded; even as Masonic secrets were guarded a couple of centuries ago. One who betrays these secrets is supposed to suffer terrible psychic, is not physical consequences. This is why many Satanists were stunned to find the use of the “Nail” word in its correct context in the third OMEN movie, THE FINAL CONFLICT, coming from the mouth of the actor supposed to be playing the son of Satan. Heads may yet roll for that one!)

THIS WAS THE SAME CHANT THAT I USED IN THE SATANIC BLACK MASS!

The “FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP” are identical to those used in the Druidic rite of witchcraft, and very similar to those used in other rites such as the Gardnerian/Alexandrian rites⁵²². “five are the points of fellowship. The Masonic version is identical to Veil version and of Druidic five points of fellowship⁵²³. The body positions (foot to foot knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back and mouth to ear) are identical to that of Freemasonry.

There is also great significance in the method of communicating the 2nd “Name” of the Melchizedek priesthood. Passing a secret name or chant from mouth to ear is ancient magickal practice-reflected in the actual Hebrew word “Qabalah.” It is a transliteration of the three Hebrew letters QBL and actually means “from mouth to ear⁵²⁴.” (The “mouth to ear” business explains why so many of these things have never been published.)

Finally, we come to the most disturbing evidence of all. Standing at the veil as a new “Temple Mormon,” I was taught the 2nd priesthood “Name”, and was astounded to see how closely it paralleled the blessing given at the end of the satanic black mass! I was familiar enough with it to be able to say it along pretty well the first time. The only difference was that the Mormons had substituted the word “loins” for an obscenity used in the satanic version! (from private documentation.)

After we had finished our sealing (which was, by the way, quite similar to our witch handfasting), we walked around the outside of the temple and were intrigued to find inverted pentagrams over many of the archways, as well as phases of the moon and stars. The inverted pentagram is universally regarded among occultists as the symbol of Satan and evil⁵²⁵. Many witches will not even use it, believing it can bring uncontrollable evil and perversion. More

⁵²¹ from a private document owned by Bill Schnoebelen, also see *Richardson’s Monitor*, p. 126, The Knight of Malta degree.

⁵²² Farrar, *Ibid.*, p.94, quoting from the 3rd degree sexual initiation, the Great Rite.

⁵²³ *Duncan’s Ritual Monitor*, p.121, also a private document owned by Bill Schnoebelen.

⁵²⁴ *Man, Myth And Magic*, v.3, p.282. Also Grey, *Concepts Of Qabalah*, Weiser, 1984, p.13.

⁵²⁵ Dr. Franz Hartmann, *Magic, White And Black*, pp. 290-291; also see *Man, Myth And Magic*, v.16, p.2159 and the cover of *The Satanic Bible* by Anton Szandor LaVey, Avon 1969.

advanced witches believe that casting and invoking inverted pentagrams causes wealth, power, and the kingdom of Lucifer to be manifest through them, here on earth!

The phases of the Moon on the temple refer to the Moon-Goddess, Diana, the Queen of Heaven,” consort of Lucifer, and Goddess of all witches⁵²⁶. Many sources refer to Diana and Lucifer being consorts.) Jeremiah, the prophet, condemned Israel for honoring the Queen of Heaven (Jer. 7:18)! Witches closely watch the moon phases, as black magic is done in the dark of the moon, and white magic is done when the moon is waxing. The Sunstones are well-known symbols of the biblical idol Ba'al. Why would God want such things on what is supposedly “His house”?

There is the issue which some LDS scholars have raised: that these resemblances are there because Satanists have stolen them from the temple. Just to briefly deal with that, it is obvious that both Masonry and Acupuncture are much older than Mormonism. It is a matter of historical fact that Joseph Smith had access to Masonic material as early as 1820⁵²⁷. It is also known that he did not actually teach any part of the endowment ceremony until about five weeks after being made a Master Mason⁵²⁸. If anyone stole anything from anybody, Smith would seem the more likely plagiarist.

The use of oaths and initiatic secrets, kept on pain of death, goes all the way back to the days before Christ⁵²⁹. The bad reputation of the inverted pentagram goes back at least to the 1590's, considerably before Joseph Smith⁵³⁰. The museum dates these documents back to the 1590's) Talismans being stitched on garments for protection is at least that old⁵³¹. The wearing of sacred undergarments goes back as far as the Babylonian period when the initiates of the temple glorifying Nimrod's deification wore such items.

The Luciferian Grimoires (ritual books) are much more difficult to pin down because they are so jealously guarded. Most sources date books like the *Black Pullet* and the *Grimorum Verum* (the source of several pieces of information given here) back to the 18th century, but this cannot be formally verified.

Nevertheless, the vast preponderance of evidence is that literally dozens of elements in the LDS temple endowment are either directly related to or derived from occult and satanic sources.

The chances that the rituals and ceremonies of the LDS church developed from a vacuum without the benefit of another earthly foundation seem rather remote. The world of the occult, druidic rites, spiritism, and other satanic beginnings have a greater relationship with the LDS temple rites than can be explained by coincidence. Examine, for a moment, in greater detail, the one great common denominator that we have briefly discussed. An honest evaluation of the facts should be very revealing.

TEMPLES, SECRET RITES, MASONRY, AND A COINCIDENCE

March 15, 1842 the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith was initiated into the Masonic order and on the following day was led through all of the Masonic Temple rituals. As Joseph wrote in his history: “Tuesday, 15,... In the evening I received the first degree in Free Masonry in the Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office” and on the following day: “Wednesday, March 16-I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree.”⁵³² And then, just six weeks later Joseph recorded: “Wednesday, (May) 4.I spent the day in the upper part of the store, that is in my private office ... in council with ... Hyrum Smith (his brother)... President Brigham Young .. instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood.... in this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days⁵³³.” In other words, the prophet was initiated into the Masonic Order and participated in the Masonic Temple rites and then six weeks later was using the same rites as the basis for his “Temple endowment.”

⁵²⁶ *Il Vangelo Della Strega (The Gospel Of The Witches)* by C.G. Leland, 1899.

⁵²⁷ Reed C. Durham, *No Help For The Widow's Son*, Martin Pub. Co, Nauvoo, Ill., 1980, p 25.

⁵²⁸ *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith-History, v.4., p.552 and vol. 5, pp. 1-2.

⁵²⁹ Mircea Eliade, *A History Of Religious Ideas*, v.1, U. of Chicago Press, 1978, p.294.

⁵³⁰ S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Greater Key Of Solomon*, De Laurence and Co., Chicago, 1914 edited from British Museum Sloane MSS 1307, 3091; add. MSS. 10,862; Harleian MSS.3981; King's MSS, 288 and Lansdown MSS., 1202 and 1203-seven codices in all.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁵³² *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 4, pp. 550, 552.

⁵³³ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, pp. 1-2.

MASONRY KEY TO RITES

This is recognized to some degree by Dr. Reed Durham who, as a Mormon Religious Instructor at the University of Utah, LDS Institute of Religion and President of the Mormon History Association, wrote:

I am convinced that in the study of Masonry lies a pivotal key to further understanding Joseph Smith and the Church ... It commenced in Joseph's home when his older brother became a Mason. ... The many parallels found between early Mormonism and the Masonry of that day are substantial ... I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church, that occurred after March 15, 1842, which did not have some Masonic interdependence...There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry. This is not to suggest that no other source of inspiration could have been involved, but the similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied...

"It is also obvious that the Nauvoo Temple architecture was in part, at least, Masonically influenced. Indeed, it appears that there was an intentional attempt to utilize Masonic symbols and motifs...

"It was true that in orthodox Masonry, ... the inclusion of women was definitely prohibited... The Joseph Smith Masonry was daily becoming less orthodox and tended to follow more in the direction of some unorthodox Masonry...

"The second type of unorthodox female Masonry was known as 'Adoptive' Masonry ... The ceremonies for women in this order were quite similar to those later found within the endowment ceremony of the Mormons... I suggest that enough evidence presently exists to declare that the entire institution of the political kingdom of God including the Council of Fifty, the living constitution, the proposed flag of the kingdom, and the anointing with coronation of the king, had its genesis in connection with Masonic thoughts and ceremonies... Can anyone deny that Masonic influence on Joseph Smith and the Church either before or after his personal Masonic membership? The evidence demands comments...

"There are many questions which still demand the answers... if we, as Mormon historians, respond to these questions and myriads [sic] like them relative to Masonry in an ostrich-like fashion, with our heads buried in the traditional sand, then I submit: there never will be 'any help for the widow's son.'"⁵³⁴

MORMON TEMPLE SURPRISES

The Mormon Temple Ceremony contains some rather interesting surprises to new initiates who do not quite know what to expect. We learn that a candidate for his "endowment" promises the Mormon Church all of his possessions, if called upon to do so⁵³⁵. Sacketts' literature carries a verbatim transcript of what is said and done in the Mormon's secret Temple rites. The Law of Sacrifice is one of the laws that a Mormon Temple initiate promises to obey. That "law" is explained in the temple this way:

The posterity of Adam down to Moses and from Moses to Jesus Christ offered up the first fruits of the field and firstlings of the flock, which continued until the death of Jesus Christ, which ended sacrifice by the shedding of blood. And as Jesus has laid down his life for the redemption of mankind, so we should covenant to sacrifice all that we possess, even our lives if necessary, in sustaining and defending the Kingdom of God (the Mormon Church). All arise... You and each of you so solemnly covenant and promise before God, angels, and these witnesses at this altar that you will observe and keep the Law of Sacrifice as contained in the Old and the New Testaments, as it had been explained to you. Each of you bow your head and say yes.⁵³⁶

Secret Oaths, in addition to certain promises that the initiates make in the temple and the secret hand grips, etc.; it is interesting to note the self imposed penalties promised to those who would reveal any portion of the Temple Ordinances. For example: There are three oaths that each initiate takes while in the temple associated with four different laws and covenants. In each case, after the "secret" token, name and sign (hand grip) are explained, the

⁵³⁴ *Mormon Miscellaneous*, October, 1975, pages 11, 12, 13, 16.

⁵³⁵ Chuck Sackett, *What's Going On In There?*

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 31.

narrator states: “I will now explain the covenant and obligation of secrecy which are associated with this token, its name, sign and penalty, and which you will be required to take upon yourselves⁵³⁷.”

DEATH PENALTIES

In each instance, when the initiate is repeating the oath, he is using his hands to pantomime the way his life would be taken if he revealed the secrets. In the first penalty oath, the initiate places his right thumb under the left ear and draws his thumb across his throat to the right ear while saying: “Rather than do so (rather than reveal these secrets), I would suffer my life to be taken.” (same pages as above). On the second oath, the initiate draws his hand across his breast from left to right while pronouncing the identical oath above. And while reciting the third oath, the right thumb is drawn across the body at the belt line. At the beginning of the ceremony it is explained that the “representation of the execution of the penalties indicates different ways in which life may be taken⁵³⁸.”

OATH REMOVED

If all this sounds a little morbid, there is one less oath that current Mormons no longer are required to take that was taken by temple participants prior to 1927. At that time, the temple ritual was modified to omit the oaths against the United States and the assassins of Joseph Smith. A letter dated Feb. 15, 1927 from the Salt Lake Temple President to the President of the St. George Temple, stated:

At the request of President Grant we have already adopted some of the changes decided upon, and it will be in order for you to do the same... Omit from the prayer in the circles all reference to retribution⁵³⁹.

SOME COINCIDENCE (?)

To summarize, the following items share commonality with both Mormons and Masons. Can an intellectually honest person disagree with the common connection? Can the Mormon honestly believe that the symbolism was “borrowed” from the LDS church by an organization that began hundreds of years before? In a court of law I think that a wise person would side with the evidence.

1. All-seeing eye 2. Anointing with oil 3. Apron 4. Beehive 5. Square and compass 6. Emblem of the clasped hands 7. Solemn Assembly in the temple 8. Five Points of Fellowship 9. Special garments applied to initiates 10. Garment markings 11. Grips (special secret handshakes) 12. The phrase “Holiness to the Lord” 13. Moon symbol 14. New Name given 15. Special prayer circle 16. Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods 17. Secret blood oaths with death penalties if revealed 18. Star and Sun. symbols 19. Temples with secret rites

CEREMONIES COMPARED

Using both Masonic and LDS sources, one can compare the amazing similarities of the ritual ceremonies in both organizations⁵⁴⁰.

THIS EVIDENCE CRIES OUT FOR SERIOUS EXPLANATION

One or two similarities could be explained as coincidence, but these many cry out for a more serious explanation. Could it be that Satan chose Joseph Smith, a “glass-looker” and folk-magician to be his point man on the continent of America?

Satan was more than able to get the necessary information into his hands, either by natural or supernatural means. Let us not forget that Smith was a medium of sorts. He may have gotten his revelations through psychic communion with demon spirits, the same way many celebrated occultists, like Mdm. Blavatsky, “brought through” their systems⁵⁴¹. It is a very safe assumption that he didn’t get them from the Biblical God of the universe.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 40,43.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 31.

⁵³⁹ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry*, Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1983, pg. 69.

⁵⁴⁰ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Temple Ceremony And Masonry*, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality* pp. 486-489.

⁵⁴¹ Constance Cumbeys, *Hidden Dangers Of The Rainbow*, Huntington House, Shreveport, LA. 1983, p.44.

The Mormon emerges from these rituals bound to darkness by bloody oaths and occultic incantations; sealed to the very principalities and powers we are told to be at war against (Ephesians 6:12). He is given over to the spirit of self-exaltation, which caused Lucifer himself to be cast out from the presence of God (Isaiah 14:12-15). He stands encased in a secret set of magic underwear operating as an occultic talisman.

What chance do they have on their own? None! The Scriptures tell us that they are led to damnation by their leaders (Isaiah 9:16), and that they don't know enough to be ashamed (Isaiah 44:9). Yet the Lord has given us power to defeat Satan!

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light." (Romans 13:12.)

We can put on that armor in Ephesians 6 to defeat the powers and principalities of Lucifer! Yes, the Mormon people are blinded by this dark thing. But Christ came to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind! (Luke 4:18.) Someone shared the light with these three witnesses. As you have read this, you have more information than over 80% of all Mormons; those that have never been to the temple. It is given to be shared with those that are in darkness or those that are headed in that direction.

CHAPTER 5

THE MIGHTY MEN OF THE CHURCH

A great deal of space has been devoted to Joseph Smith, "Prophet Seer and Revelator." There were many other seers, witnesses and soldiers in the church. The church tells its followers that "the Church is reaching its fulness due to those faithful Saints that followed the Prophet⁵⁴²."

It might be instructive to examine these Saints and determine exactly what they did to help achieve the "fulness of the Church." Mormon are scrupulous in their attention to records. Strangely enough, they have preserved even the most incriminating evidence. It may be that this is done because they don't recognize the turpitude of their leaders or choose to gloss over it.

Joseph Smith had great expectations for his Twelve Apostles. In fact, the Mormon God had a plan for distinguished service for not only for the Apostles but for many of the other soldiers that joined with Joseph. How much time Joseph spent keeping his soldiers in line is anyone's guess. The track record of this inner circle was weak at best and outright rebellious to the leadership of Joseph if the annals of history are any indicator.

WILLIAM E. McLELLIN, PREACHER TO THE MULTITUDES

One such revelation given by Joseph Smith on January 21, 1836⁵⁴³ which dealt with one particular soldier who made an impact on the formation of the early church. He was William E. McLellin.

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell.... I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in their midst, and they

⁵⁴² Bruce E. McConkie, Regional Representatives seminar, Oct 4, 1973.

⁵⁴³ *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 2, pages 380-381.

did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept. I also beheld Elder McLellin in the south, standing upon a hill, surrounded by a vast multitude, preaching to them, and a lame man standing before him supported by his crutches; he threw them down at his word and leaped as a hart, by the mighty power of God. Also, I saw Elder Brigham Young standing in a strange land, in the far south and west, in a desert place, upon a rock in the midst of about a dozen men of color, who appeared hostile. He was preaching to them in their own tongue, and the angel of God standing above his head, with a drawn sword in his hand, protecting him, but he did not see it. And I finally saw the Twelve in the celestial kingdom of God. I also beheld the redemption of Zion, and many things which the tongue of man cannot describe in full.

The Mormon god was probably having revelation relapse when he revealed to Joseph that McLellin was “his man.” Could it be possible that this Elohim of Kolob could have made such a colossal mistake in casting the mantle on his shoulders?

Mormon scripture might make the casual reader wonder who this pinnacle of grace might be. We read:

“Behold, thus saith the Lord unto my servant William E. McLellin-Blessed are you, inasmuch as you have turned away from your iniquities, and have received my truths, saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Savior of the world, even as believe on my name. Verily I say unto you, blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting fulness of my gospel.....Verily I say unto you, my servant William, that you are clean, but not all repent, therefore, of those things which are not pleasing in my sight, saith the Lord, for the Lord will show them unto you”⁵⁴⁴.

The entire Section 66 is devoted to William McLellin and the mighty deeds he would perform. He would greatly disappoint the Mormon god with his denunciation of the church. Obviously, an all-knowing God would have known the heart of this man. An account of his life and the telling paper he authored has come back to haunt the church, time and time again.

THE AMAZING MCLELLIN PAPERS

William E. McLellin was a man who stepped diagonally through a special page of history. His date of birth is not recorded, except to be guessed at about 1806, a year after Joseph Smith’s own birthday. McLellin’s place in history is only in his relationship to Smith and the church he founded.

He was converted in 1831 by Elders Samuel Smith and Reynolds Cahoon while on their way from Kirtland to Independence, Missouri. McLellin packed up and accompanied them, being baptized and ordained an Elder on the way.

During that same summer, he traveled to Kirtland and quickly gained membership in the inner circle of Joseph’s most devoted disciples. Little is written about those first few months, but a revelation given to Joseph with regard to McLellin, dated October 25, 1831 shows that he was among the select.

For the next four years, William McLellin enjoyed the close companionship of Joseph Smith and the leaders of the Church. It can only be assumed that things fared well for him, for in 1835, a conference was held, during which his name would be forever tied to that of Mormonism.

On Saturday, the 14th of February, 1835, the prophet Joseph Smith opened a special conference, setting forth the proposition for the three witnesses (to the *Book of Mormon*) to choose the twelve Apostles, as already commanded in an earlier revelation. By the authority of Joseph Smith, William E. McLellin and eleven other faithful brethren filled those posts which the prophet claimed had been vacated for almost 18 centuries.

By May of 1837, this group of eternal Apostles were in open rebellion.

Written charges were made against Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer ... During the winter and spring of 1837, these rebels included in their list F.G. Williams of the First Presidency, Martin Harris, D. Whitmer, Lyman Johnson, P. P. Pratt, and W. E. McLellin”⁵⁴⁵.

The rebellion included W. W. Phelps who questioned the prophet’s “monarchist power and authority”⁵⁴⁶. By the time the rebellion would end, all three witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*, five of the other eight additional witnesses

⁵⁴⁴ *Documentary History of the Church*, 66:1-3.

⁵⁴⁵ William A. Linn, *The Story of The Mormons*, MacMillan Co, 1923.

and eight of the original 12 Apostles would be gone. Among them was the man whose words would surface over a hundred years after his death and shake the foundations of Mormonism!

McLellin did not disappear easily. Throughout the years, he continued to be a thorn in the side of the church. He never gave up the battle, never forgave his 'enemies' and never returned to the flock. What is most significant, McLellin had a testimony of the *Book of Mormon* that carried beyond the grave.

In the December 5th, 1985 edition of the LDS Church News, the church proudly printed a letter written by William McLellin in 1880. In it, he confirms his testimony of the *Book of Mormon*. Headlined, "FALLEN EARLY APOSTLE NEVER DENIED HIS BELIEF IN BOOK OF MORMON", it quotes McLellin as follows,

But when a man goes at the Book of M, he touches the apple of my eye. He fights against truth-against purity-against light-against the purest, or one of the purest books on earth. I have more confidence in the Book of Mormon than any book of this wide earth.

Yet, the letter states,

I have no faith in Mormonism, as an ism, even from its start, neither have I in Latter day Saintism from its start through all its developments. I have no confidence that the church organized by J. Smith and O. Cowdery was sat up or established as it ought to have been. And the Further its run still farther from the true way-farther from the simplicity of that divine record, the Book of M.

The tragic story of a man who loved the *Book of Mormon* but hated the corruption of the prophet, Joseph Smith, is apparent in the life and writings of William McLellin. He never forgave Joseph for the multitude of sins that brought such destruction.

EXACTLY WHAT DID HE SAY?

With the bombings and secret business of the buying and selling of historic documents in 1985 and 1986, it is only fitting that this voice crying repentance to the Church in 1838 be heard by all the world today. To that end, we share his 49 positions of LDS theological error.

Things which I do not believe that is generally believed by Latter Day Saints and (them only?)

1. I do not believe, that Joseph translated the book of Mormon. He only read the translation as it appeared before him. The Lord translated it for him. So says the book "Wherefore, thou shalt read the words which shalt give unto thee,, Page 111, of the Palmyra edition.
2. I do not believe, he ever possessed the Urim and Thummim during his whole life.
3. I do not believe, he ever possessed the Interpreters after he lost the 116 pages first translated.
4. I do not believe, that he ever received authority to gather the Gentiles to a Zion.
5. I do not believe, that he or any man ever had authority to appoint and ordain Apostles of Christ.
6. I don't believe, that an Angel ever ordained a man to any ministerial office in the Church of Christ.
7. I don't believe, the church was ever established by Joseph, it was only organized. Set up by man's authority.
8. I do not believe, in receiving J. Smith's word as from the mouth of God as we are commanded on the 6th of April/30.
9. I don't believe, in holding general conferences to make rules and laws for the government of the church of Christ.
10. I do not believe, in disembodied spirits communing with man, as Angels do.
11. I don't believe, In a Prophet being placed at the Head of the church as Leader and sole Dictator. Sep. 1830.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.154,155.

12. I don't believe, in nine officers as ministers placed in the church, instead of three.
13. I don't believe, in two Priesthoods existing in the church of Christ at one and the same time, as Smith planted them.
14. I don't believe, in Aaronic or Melchisedec high Priests existing in the true church of Christ in this dispensation.
15. I don't believe, in altering (said to be) true revelations from God, as Smith did in a miserable manner in 1831.
16. I don't believe, in the order of Enoch, and false names, as was set up and practiced in Zion in the spring of 1832.
17. I don't believe, in an entire change of name of the church to that of the church of Latter Day Saints on the 3 of May 1834.
18. I don't believe, in setting up three men as first Presidents of the church, instead of twelve Apostles at the Head.
19. I don't believe, in a council of 15 men as the highest court in the church to try transgressors, when three could do better.
20. I don't believe, in the spirit and practice of War, as by J. Smith and army in 1834, in their tramp to Missouri.
21. I don't believe, in the word sent by O. Hyde and J. Gouts, from Smith and council for the church to fight in their own defence.
22. I don't believe, in revelating and ordaining a Bishop, to take charge of church property as his business.
23. I don't believe, in ordaining a Patriarch to give patriarchal blessings to the whole church.
24. I don't believe, in pretending to dedicate Zion, and the Temple in Kirtland, and no power from God to assist them.
25. I do not believe, in pretending to translate with Urim and Thummim when only a small Stone was used.
26. I don't believe, in only one man to receive and give off revelations for the whole church. Its unchristian.
27. I don't believe, in Moroni's revealing the place of the plates to Joseph Smith in 1823, again in 1827.
28. I don't believe, in John the Baptist, or Peter, James, and John ordaining J. Smith and Oliver Cowdery.
29. I don't t believe, in the Tithing law, it is opposed to the consecration law, and sets it aside. One was all, the other one [10.]
30. I don't believe, in driving the witnesses from Far West by his Danites at the peril of their lives, as was done in 1838.
31. I don't believe, in robbing the Gentiles in Davis Co. in 1838 of quantities of household good, as the L.D. Saints did do.
32. I don't believe, in the doctrine of hereditary rights of priesthood in the Gospel system.
33. I don't believe, in the doctrine of plurality of Gods, and God making, as J. Smith taught in Nauvoo, in a sermon there.
34. I don't believe, in the doctrine of baptizing for the dead by proxy as was taught and practiced in Nauvoo.
35. I don't believe, that God himself was once a man as man are now, and that he rose by exaltation to be a God.
36. I don't believe, that man can or will ever by any system of exaltation become Gods and reign over world glorified.

37. I don't believe, in polygamy as taught and practiced by Joseph Smith in Kirtland, in Far West, and in Nauvoo.
38. I don't believe, in the book of Abraham (pretended to be) translated from Papyrus taken from the bosom of an Egyptian Mummy.
39. I don't believe, in Joseph's savage abuse of Elders who hapened to differ with him in their opinions.
40. I don't believe, in giving false and fictitious names as Smith gave to nine Elders in Zion in the year 1832.
41. I don't believe, in the attempted endowment in the Temple in Kirtland in 1836. It was an entire failure.
42. I do not believe, in giving false revelations as Oliver's to the Lamanites, that Teachers have no authority to baptize [& as to the law.]
43. I don't believe, that any man has any authority to ordain or consecrate a Seer, or Prophet of the Lord. Its a gift from God.
44. I don't believe, in ordaining or having high Priests, or Aaronic priests in the true church of Christ in the [gospel? great?] dispensation.
45. I don't believe, Smith's revelations ought to have bean printed in 1833, and the Lord suffered a mob to destroy them.
46. I don't believe, Smith's everlasting orders of Enoch, set up in Zion, and then in Kirtland in 1832 ever accomplished any good.
47. I don't believe, in altering his revelations three times before they were printed in the book of Doctrine and Covenants.
48. I don't believe, in Smith's places of gathering in Zion, in Kirtland, in Far West, in Diamon, and in Nauvoo.
49. I don't believe, in building a great Temple in Kirtland, and going in debt there for \$30,000 dollars, but it went to decay⁵⁴⁷.

PLEASE PASS THE ERASERS!

One false prophecy that has hidden significance is this one which has come to new found prominence recently. In 1976, the 137th section of *Doctrine & Covenants* was submitted to the general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for a vote to be "sustained" as scripture. It is a narrative of a vision supposedly seen by Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio in 1836.

What the members who voted on this new addition to scripture were not told by "the Brethren," is that whole paragraphs (216 words) of the actual revelation as recorded in *The History Of The Church* had been conveniently left out of the version to be included in the *D&C*. The reason for these omissions was that four obviously false prophecies were contained in the part of the revelation which was censored out. These were prophecies so obviously false that even the average LDS reader would pick them up. Therefore they went down the "black hole" of Mormon history.

What exactly were in these missing parts? Well, if you go to the official history of the LDS church published by the church's own publishing company, you will be easily able to find the missing prophecies. Here is what is not in the new D&C 137:

First of all, Smith claimed to see his (original LDS) Twelve apostles all in the celestial kingdom⁵⁴⁸. This is difficult to imagine, since there was already division between Smith and the majority of the Apostles, beginning with discord in Kirtland, Ohio. The first portion of the "missing words" shows his less than subtle rebuke of their I resistance to his will. "...fatigued tattered..eyes cast downward The Saviour looked upon them and wept." Smith was

⁵⁴⁷ As published in the *Salt Lake City Tribune*, Monday, December 2, 1985.

⁵⁴⁸ *History Of The Church*, Deseret Books, 1978, 2:187.

calling them to get into line and submit themselves to his authority. That's the carrot offered in the last portion, "I finally saw the Twelve in the Celestial Kingdom of God."

How could they have ever attained the celestial kingdom under those conditions? They couldn't! They were not only accursed by their very acts of apostasy or excommunication, but fell victim to the LDS Church's own scriptural denunciation.

Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth there-from, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come⁵⁴⁹.

Although a few of these men later returned to the church, none of them were even close to the standards necessary for attainment of that highest degree of glory. The majority remained apart for life. Therefore, the prophetic utterance, "I finally saw the Twelve in the Celestial Kingdom of God." was obviously false. It would have been false even if only one Apostle remained outside the fold.

Second, the vision of McLellin preaching and working miracles in the south never came true because he apostatized from the church without doing it! The part regarding Elder McLellin is suspect because he was EXCOMMUNICATED on May 11, 1838. He became one of the bitterest enemies the Mormon church ever had and appeared not to have been destroyed as promised by the god of Mormonism.

Third, Although Brigham Young did bring the Mormons west and was a great colonizer and orator, the vision of Brigham Young preaching to "men of color" in their own language, in some strange and faraway place in the southwest never took place either or at least there is no trace of it in the very detailed records and diaries concerning his reign as prophet.

Finally, "Zion" (Independence, Mo.) was never redeemed, has never been redeemed in the 150+ years since the prophecy was made. (see below, for more on Zion). Is it any wonder that the Brethren chose to remove whole chunks of this "inspired" revelation? Four false prophecies for the price of one!

Joseph Smith recorded that he saw the Twelve in the celestial kingdom of God. How is that possible when 5 of the apostles were either excommunicated or apostatized, never to return to the church? According to Mormon doctrine this would not be possible (for apostates and excommunicated individuals to reach the celestial kingdom).

1. Lyman Johnson ———Excommunicated April 13, 1838⁵⁵⁰.
2. Brigham Young ———OK.
3. Heber C. Kimball ———OK.
4. Orson Hyde ———Disfellowshipped August 4, 1835. Priesthood restored June 27, 1839. Restored as apostle at conference of October 6, 7, 8, 1839.
5. David W. Patten ———OK.
6. Luke S. Johnson ———Apostatized December, 1837⁵⁵¹.
7. William E. McLellin —Excommunicated May 11, 1838⁵⁵².
8. John F. Boynton ———Apostatized December, 1837⁵⁵³.
9. Orson Pratt ———Rebaptized & Ordained January 20, 1843 Restored as apostle⁵⁵⁴, (what happened to him?)
10. William Smith ———Excommunicated October 19, 1845⁵⁵⁵.
11. Thomas B. Marsh ———Excommunicated March 17, 1839⁵⁵⁶.
12. Parley P. Pratt ———OK.

It should be noted that Thomas B. Marsh was rebaptized in 1857 and died in Utah a member of the Church, though never again a member of the Twelve.

⁵⁴⁹ Doctrine & Covenants, Sect. 84:40-41.

⁵⁵⁰ *Documentary History of the Church*, 3:20.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:528.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 3:31

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2:528.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:255

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7:483

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:284

It is interesting to note that the first part of the above vision was accepted as scripture on April 3, 1976. The last part of the vision (listed above) was not accepted as scripture. Is it possible that the reason that the Mormon leaders did not present the entire vision to be accepted as scripture is that it was clear that the last part could not happen? If this is so then it would make the Mormon leaders willful deceivers.

It is also interesting to note that the vision was further altered by Mormon leaders. The vision was recorded in Joseph Smith's diary under the date of January 21, 1836. In Joseph Smith's diary the beginning of the revelation read as follows:

"The heavens were opened upon us and I beheld the celestial Kingdom of God, I saw father Adam, and Abraham and Michael and my father and mother, my brother Alvin..."⁵⁵⁷

Now, what is wrong with the above part? The problem is that in Mormon theology Adam is Michael. Thus if Adam is Michael then Joseph Smith could not have seen "both" of them in the celestial kingdom. Because of this problem the Mormon leaders deleted the words "and Michael" from the revelation. This sound a great deal like the Elias/Elijah confusion.

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

As an attempt to authenticate the *Book of Mormon*, the testimony of three witnesses is given in the frontispiece. When delving into the letters written by the "witnesses" and listening carefully to what they testified to, the act of their witness falls into the realm of serious doubt. There were first three witness that testified to the authenticity of the plates. Later there were eight whose veracity will be noted later. We shall now deal with the three, which in any case, appear in the official version:

Be It Known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

Oliver Cowdery David Whitmer Martin Harris

OLIVER COWDERY

Oliver Cowdery was the Church's second Elder, often called the "Second President." The early day companion of Joseph Smith, he was scribe for the *Book of Mormon*, present at the "Restoration of the Priesthood," and as close to the real truth as any man⁵⁵⁸.

However, in 1838 in Kirtland, Oliver confronted Joseph Smith with the charge of adultery with Fanny Alger, and with lying and teaching false doctrines⁵⁵⁹. Joseph Smith denied this and charged Cowdery with being a liar⁵⁶⁰. Church records now show Miss Alger was Smith's first "spiritual wife." Oliver was telling the truth!⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁷ *Joseph Smith's Diary*, January 21, 1836, p.136; original in LDS historical department.

⁵⁵⁸ *Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith History, 2:72-76.

⁵⁵⁹ Private Letter to Brother Warren Cowdery, by Oliver Cowdery, Jan. 21, 1838.

⁵⁶⁰ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 16-18; Elder's Journal, Joseph Smith, July 1838.

⁵⁶¹ *Historical Record*, 1886, Vol. 5, page 233.

Cowdery was excommunicated for this and other crimes⁵⁶². Later, as a Methodist, he denied the *Book of Mormon*⁵⁶³ and publicly confessed his sorrow and shame for his connection with Mormonism⁵⁶⁴.

While the Mormon church claims he rejoined them in the fall of 1848⁵⁶⁵, they also accused him later the same year, with trying to 'raise up the Kingdom again' with the Apostate, William E. McLellin⁵⁶⁶.

Oliver Cowdery was publicly charged by Joseph Smith and leading Mormons with stealing, lying, perjury, counterfeiting, adultery, and being the leader of a gang of "scoundrels of the deepest degree!"⁵⁶⁷,

DAVID WHITMER

David Whitmer saw the plates 'by the eye of faith' handled by an angel⁵⁶⁸. He later told of finding them lying in a field and later still, told Orson Pratt they were on a table with all sorts of brass plates, gold plates, the Sword of Laban, the 'Director' and the Urim and Thumim⁵⁶⁹.

One particular incident probably most responsible for David Whitmer's fall from grace was his revelation of a conversation with God. Not once, but twice. First, as recorded in "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" in the *Book of Mormon*, and second, in June of 1838, where in his own book titled *An Address To All Believers In Christ*, he reported "God spake to me again by His own voice from the heavens, and told me to separate myself from among the Latter-Day Saints..."⁵⁷⁰,

During the summer of 1837, while in Kirtland, he pledged his new loyalty to a Prophetess (as did Martin and Oliver) who used a black seer stone and danced herself into 'trances'⁵⁷¹.

It was the start of the finish for him. It ended in 1847 in his declaration to Oliver that he (Whitmer) was to be the Prophet of the New Church of Christ and Oliver a counselor⁵⁷².

In the meantime, he was excommunicated and roughly put out. His and Oliver's families were, in fact, driven into the streets and robbed by the Mormons while Whitmer and Cowdery were away trying to arrange a place to flee⁵⁷³.

Cursed by leaders such as Sidney Rigdon, Whitmer was denounced by the Prophet Joseph Smith as a "dumb beast to ride" and "an ass to bray out cursings instead of blessings"⁵⁷⁴.

MARTIN HARRIS

Martin Harris was first a Quaker, then a Universalist, next a Restorationist, then a Baptist, next a Presbyterian, and then a Mormon⁵⁷⁵. After his excommunication in 1837, he changed his religion eight more times, going from the Shakers to one Mormon splinter group to the next, and back to the main group in 1842⁵⁷⁶. Yet, in 1846, Harris was preaching among the Saints in England for the Apostate James J. Strang⁵⁷⁷.

⁵⁶² *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 3, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁶³ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 2, page 482; *Improvement Era*, January 1969, page 56; Joseph Greehalgh, *Oliver Cowdery-The Man Outstanding*, 1965, page 28.

⁵⁶⁴ Charles Shook, *The True Origin of The Book of Mormon*, 1914, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁶⁵ *Historical Record*, 1886, Vol. 5, page 201.

⁵⁶⁶ *The Mormon Frontier, Diary of Hosea Stout*, Vol. 2, page 336.

⁵⁶⁷ *Senate Document 189*, Feb. 15, 1841, pp. 6-9; *Comprehensive History of the Church*, B.H. Roberts, pg. Vol. 1, pp. 438, 439.

⁵⁶⁸ *Palmyra Reflector*, March 19, 1831.

⁵⁶⁹ *Millennial Star*, Vol. XL, pp. 771-772.

⁵⁷⁰ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. I, p. 27.

⁵⁷¹ *Biographical Sketches*, Lucy Smith, pp. 211-213.

⁵⁷² Letter to Oliver Cowdery, by David Whitmer, Sept. 8, 1847, Printed in *The 'Ensign of Liberty*, May, 1848, page 93; also see *Ensign of Liberty*, August, 1849, pp. 101-104, Modern Microfilm, SLC, page 22.

⁵⁷³ John Whitmer, *History of the Church*.

⁵⁷⁴ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 3, page 228.

⁵⁷⁵ *Mormonism Unveiled*, E.D. Howe, 1834, pp. 260-261.

⁵⁷⁶ *Improvement Era*, March 1969, page 63; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, page 164, Brigham Young.

⁵⁷⁷ Andrew Jensen, *Church Chronology*, 1899, page 31; *Millennial Star*, Vol. 8, Nov. 15, 1846, pp. 124-128.

Harris testified that his testimony for Shakerism was greater than it was for Mormonism. The Shaker's "Sacred Roll and Book" was also delivered by an angel⁵⁷⁸.

His later testimony that he saw the plates by "the eyes of faith and not with the natural eyes" should eliminate him automatically as a witness⁵⁷⁹.

In the Elder's Journal for August, 1838, Joseph Smith denounces him as "so far beneath contempt that to notice him would be too great a sacrifice for a gentleman to make. The Church exerted some restraint on him, but now he has given loose to all kinds of abominations, lying, cheating, swindling, and all kinds of debauchery⁵⁸⁰."

THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT, HIRUM!

It is difficult to believe that the taint of occultism could not be transmitted to Joseph's closest followers. Several others, as have been noted, dabbled in "peep stoning" and other "majick arts." Hiram Page apparently assumed that the gift was there for the taking. He was officially warned away from it by Joseph Smith who claimed revelation exclusively for himself⁵⁸¹. It is not known how the successors to the Presidency would respond to this but it has obviously not failed to keep the revelatory lines to the Mormon god open. While revelations have failed to fill many books after the death of Joseph Smith, the Prophets have, nevertheless, claim to have tapped the root of truth. Back to Hiram Page. "Hiram Page had in his possession a certain stone, by which he had obtained certain 'revelations'⁵⁸²." Who was "fooled" by these "revelations?" None other than our rock solid "witnesses," Oliver Cowdery and the family of David Whitmer⁵⁸³. It wouldn't do to have two prophets, even for the price of one. Just to make sure that everyone understood who the rightful keeper of the peep stone was, Joseph revealed:

"And again, thou [addressing Oliver Cowdery] shall take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him⁵⁸⁴."

THE PROPHET IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE PROPHET!

Things looked bleak, indeed, for the flock upon news of the death of the Prophet. In 1844, Joseph Smith was shot dead in the Carthage Jail gun battle. The Mormons were left in uncertainty and confusion. As Gordon Fraser described it, "With the death of Joseph Smith, the entire church was thrust into a state of chaos, with a dozen potential leaders contending for the mantle of the Prophet⁵⁸⁵." The various parties and claimants began assembling in Nauvoo, Illinois.

The succession to the presidency was not a subject that many had given thought to. While accession to the seat of earthly exhalation followed a rather cumbersome and confused path, the right of ascendancy would, no doubt, fall within a rather narrow circle of serious candidates.

Most followers of Joseph Smith continued to express their fealty to the martyred prophet. Many expected the assumption of the presidency to be one of hereditary succession. When all else fails, it is said, read the instructions. What had the prophet conveyed concerning his successor?

CAT OUT OF THE BAG

Joseph had made the pathway to the Presidency quite explicit in his blessing to his son, Joseph, III. This revealing item, inexplicably lost, suppressed, or forgotten, resurfaced in the Spring of 1981. As explained in the March 19, 1981 issue of the Mormon Church's own Deseret News:

⁵⁷⁸ *Case Against Mormonism*, Tanner, Vol. 2, pp. 50-58; *Martin Harris-Witness & Benefactor*, BYU 1955 Thesis, Wayne C. Gunnell, page 52; *The Braden & Kelly Debate*, page 173.

⁵⁷⁹ *The Braden & Kelly Debate*, page 173.

⁵⁸⁰ J.A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way*, pp. 256-257.

⁵⁸¹ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Sect. 28:2.

⁵⁸² *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 109.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, pg. 110.

⁵⁸⁴ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Sect. 28:11

⁵⁸⁵ Gordon Fraser, *Sects of the Latter-Day Saints*, pg. 16.

A handwritten document thought to be a father's blessing given by Joseph Smith Jr., first president and prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, to his son Joseph Smith III, has been acquired by the Church Historical Department.

The document, which includes the possibility of Joseph Smith, III succeeding his father as prophet and church leader, was presented Thursday to authorities of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in exchange for another valuable church document.

The artifacts were exchanged at offices of the Church Historical Departmen[t] with Earl E. Olson, assistant managing editor of LDS Church Historical Department, Donald T. Schmidt, church archivist, and Richard P. Howard, RLDS Church historian participating...

"Olson and other LDS officials said they are convinced the blessing is authentic. Handwriting and the paper were examined and compared with other documents...."

The blessing document, dated Jan. 17, 1844, is thought to have been written by Thomas Bullock, one of several men who served as clerk to Joseph Smith Jr....

Church officials obtained the document from Mark William Hofmann, [infamous bomber and] collector of historical documents and antiques. He said he received it from a descendant of Thomas Bullock. Church officials declined to say how much was paid for the document...

The document outlines a blessing given by Joseph Smith Jr. to his son, then age 11, and includes the possibility of the son succeeding his father 'to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: A Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church'⁵⁸⁶.

Given January 17, 1844, and known as the Joseph Smith Blessing, it reads:

A blessing, given to Joseph Smith, 3rd, by his father, Joseph Smith, Jun., on Jan. 17, 1844.

Blessed of the Lord is my son Joseph, who is called the third, for the Lord knows the integrity of his heart, and loves him, because of his faith, and righteous desires. And for this cause, has the Lord raised him up; that the promise made to the fathers might be fulfilled, even that the anointing of the progenitor shall be upon the head of my son, and his seed after him, from generation to generation. For he shall be my successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: a Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church; which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right. "Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself. When he is grown, he shall be a strength to his brethren, and a comfort to his mother. Angels will minister unto him, and he will be wafted as on eagle's wings, and be as wise as serpents, even a multiplicity of blessings shall be his. Amen.

This blessing, or prophecy, as it may be more properly termed, is probably the most clear cut false prophecy Joseph Smith ever gave. The key is in the second paragraph. History records that Joseph Smith III lived to see old age, beyond the age of eighty. He did not abide in the Mormon church. He abandoned the Utah church and became the President of the RLDS church on April 6, 1860.

The fact that he lived to such a ripe old age and the fact that he was not taken in an instant because he did not abide with the Utah church is proof positive that this is a false prophecy.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

There is another aspect of this prophecy that most everyone has overlooked. This prophecy was only one of eight possible methods for the succession to the Presidency that Joseph Smith had established between 1834 and 1844⁵⁸⁷.

⁵⁸⁶ *Deseret News*, March 19, 1981.

⁵⁸⁷ *Sunstone*, vol. 6, No. 2, pages 2-4; The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844, BYU Studies, Winter 1976, pp. 187-233 by D. Michael Quinn.

1. By a counselor in the First Presidency. 2. By a special appointment. 3. Through the office of Associate President. 4. By the Presiding Patriarch. 5. By the Council of Fifty. 6. By the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. 7. By the three priesthood councils. 8. By a descendant of Joseph Smith, Jr.

In Section 132, verse 8, the Mormon god states, “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.” Providing eight possible ways for the succession to the Presidency is utter chaos in the normal scheme of things.

Examining the succession issue another way, outside the context of the “Utah” church, the Mormons were faced with a schism of potentially disastrous proportions. Should there be an open struggle for the job of patriarch, the very faith of the followers would be jeopardized. While Sidney Rigdon was always considered an “also ran,” the test boiled down to the choice of either Joseph, III or Brigham Young.

IF I AM A CANDIDATE, I WILL NOT..... WAIT A MINUTE!

Time was of the essence and delaying succession would work to the detriment of the Church. At first, Brigham Young was prepared to accept the hereditary ascendancy of the young boy, Joseph. In fact, Brigham kind of hinted that he would just “mind the store” until Joseph Smith, III was old enough to assume his rightful place as president. On June 3, 1860, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Brigham Young said:

What of Joseph Smith’s family? What of his boys? They are in the hands of God, and when they make their appearance before this people, full of his power, there are none but what will say Amen! we are ready to receive you.

The brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph’s legal successor. You never head me say so. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and the wolves out of the flock. I do not care a groat who rises up. I do not think anything about being Joseph’s successor. That is nothing that concerns me⁵⁸⁸.

On June 29, 1856, Heber C. Kimball, a councilor to Brigham Young taught:

At present the Prophet Joseph’s boys lay apparently in a state of slumber, everything seems to be perfectly calm with them, by and by God will wake them up, and they will roar like the thunders of Mount Sinai⁵⁸⁹.

However skillful Brigham was in maintaining his availability, he apparently chose to appear less than grasping. As the summer wore on, an amazing event transpired. The article by Mark Hewitt tells of the seeds that were sown that resulted in the split of the church that resulted in the beginning of the “reorganized,” or RLDS Church.

BEHIND THE LEGEND OF BRIGHAM YOUNG’S TRANSFIGURATION

On August 8, 1844 a General Conference was held there to consider the matter of Smith’s successor. Some 8,000 Mormons were present⁵⁹⁰. Sidney Rigdon spent nearly 2 hours declaring that he had received a revelation that God wanted him to be the guardian to build “the Church up unto Joseph.” Rigdon called on the Mormons to recognize him as their leader⁵⁹¹.

Brigham Young, the President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, then went to the podium and proclaimed that the Apostles were the true successors of Smith and held the powers of the priesthood⁵⁹². Others believed Smith’s oldest son should succeed the slain leader. A letter recently came to light indicating that this was, indeed, Smith’s intention⁵⁹³.

However, during Young’s address, a miracle supposedly occurred. According to eyewitnesses, Brigham Young was transfigured so as to appear and sound like Joseph Smith. George Q. Cannon wrote, “If Joseph had risen from the dead and again spoken in their hearing, the effect could not have been more startling than it was to many present at

⁵⁸⁸ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, p. 69.

⁵⁸⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁰ William Wise, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, pg. 67-68.

⁵⁹¹ *Denominations That Base Their Beliefs On The Teachings Of Joseph Smith The Mormon Prophet*, Daughters of Utah Pioneers pg. 13-14.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, pg. 13-15.

⁵⁹³ *TIME*, March 30, 1981 pg. 77; *The Washington Star*, March 20, 1981.

the meeting, it was the voice of Joseph himself.. it seemed in the eyes of the people as if it were the very person of Joseph which before them⁵⁹⁴.”

Benjamin F. Johnson related, “I saw in the transfiguration of Brigham Young; the tall, straight and portly form of the Prophet Joseph Smith, clothed in a sheen of light, covering him to his feet; and I heard the real and perfect voice of the prophet even to the whistle, as in years passed, caused by the loss of a tooth said to have been broken out by the mobs of Nauvoo⁵⁹⁵.”

Most of the gathered Mormons considered this phenomenon to indicate divine approval upon Young as Smith’s successor. In 1847, Young was officially sustained as President of the Church. It was Young, of course, who led the Mormons to Utah. Some critics have passed the transfiguration story off as a hoax or clever trickery. But, knowing the occultic background of Mormonism⁵⁹⁶, it is quite possible that what occurred was a type of physical phenomenon, well known by spiritualist mediums.

During seances, mediums under demonic power often practice “transfiguration”. A mist will appear around the medium’s face and soon their features take the form of someone entirely different. It could be a man, woman or child. The eyes may even appear a different color. The voice that speaks won’t be that of the medium, but rather will fit the character appearing in the “transfiguration”.

Many times the form is recognized as a departed loved one by attendants at the seance. These apparitions are supposedly the spirits of the dead, though they are really demonic delusions beguiling the unwary⁵⁹⁷.

Could Young’s appearance as Smith have occurred, in fact, as a powerful manifestation of the occultic transfiguration, perpetuated by the powers of darkness to stabilize the shaken Mormon cult? Mormonism has since grown to be one of Satan’s formidable masterpieces of deception and spiritual bondage. Many precious souls will follow the devil into the lake of fire as a result of Smith, Young, and Mormonism.

LDS, RLDS, OR 130 OTHER FLAVORS

To the uninformed, the question might arise as to what differences exist between the Utah church and the Missouri church. Both claim to be the true church, the successor of the church that Joseph built. Both claim to have the true, inspired word. Indeed, the RLDS has a Doctrine and Covenants which roughly parallel that of the LDS church. The content appears to be similar with the exception of the numbering system and additional revelations in each by their respective successors.

One revelation that is definitely not in the LDS D&C is the only revelation given by Brigham Young in his 30 years as Prophet. Section 136 claims to be “The word and the will of the Lord, given through President Brigham Young....”

A faithful Mormon might choose to believe that their god was ascribing his blessing to their church through their prophet. The only problem was that there were either too many gods or too many prophets. This was made evident in another revelation, to another church, through another prophet.

A “revelation” to the “Reorganized” church (Missouri) through their prophet: “Harken unto me, O ye elders of my church ...”(RLDS Doctrine and Covenants, section 115, 1978 ed. The second of many “revelations” given to Joseph Smith, the III, contained in the “Reorganized” church’s “revelations”)

Joseph Smith, III did indeed become a seer and a revelator and a prophet unto the Church. Yes, he became President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. And, No, he did not become president of, nor would he have anything to do with, the LDS Church headquartered in Utah. After the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. was murdered certain members of the Church at Nauvoo, including the slain prophet’s wife Emma and brother, Apostle William Smith, believed that Brigham Young cheated Joseph Smith, Jr.’s son, Joseph Smith III, out of his rightful position.

⁵⁹⁴ Gordon Fraser, *Sects of the Latter-Day Saints*, pg. 13.

⁵⁹⁵ Fraser, *Ibid*, pg. 13-14.

⁵⁹⁶ Decker & Hunt, *The God Makers*.

⁵⁹⁷ Raphael Gasson, *The Challenging Counterfeit*.

Several reasons exist for the theological division, probably the greatest being that the Reorganized LDS people deplored polygamy and “blood atonement” while the Utah Mormons taught that the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. taught both doctrines. That, and the prophets widow Emma’s hatred of Brigham Young.

The Utah church did not acknowledge that Joseph Smith, Jr. blessed his son, Joseph Smith, III to become president. That would be tantamount to agreeing that the Utah church was wrong and that the Reorganized Church was the “one true church.”

And how do we know that the Utah Mormons denied such a blessing was ever given? On pages 10 and 98 of the 122 page “Blood Atonement,” Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., then an apostle in the Utah Mormon Church, stated that:

“In proof that the Prophet did not ordain or consecrate his son as his successor the reader is referred to the affidavit of John W. Rigdon and Bathsheba W. Smith.”

In addition, President Wilford Woodruff the fourth Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Utah Mormon Church made it crystal clear on April 10, 1898 that Prophet Joseph never set his son apart to lead the church:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith has no son that stands in the midst of the Church of God and bears record of his father. He never has had; possibly never will have. I will give you a testimony here that will show you where I stand with regard to this matter. Joseph Smith never ordained his son Joseph, never blessed him nor set him apart to lead this Church and Kingdom on the face of the earth. When he or any other man says he did, they state that which is false before high heaven⁵⁹⁸.”

One might wonder why would a president and prophet of God would say that. When we reread the Blessing it suddenly becomes clear. Remember that the Utah church never had the son of the Prophet Joseph as a Seer and a Revelator, while the Reorganized LDS Church did. A simple clerical error, you might suggest? Many articles have been written that make the blessing/succession question much clearer⁵⁹⁹.

GREAT MEN DREAM GREAT DREAMS

Aside from the scriptural prophecies of the prophets, those recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, the successors to Joseph Smith, Jr. have been recorded as issuing statements that border on revelation. While it might be interesting to examine some of the thought processes that are initiated when receiving these inspirations, one can only wonder what repercussions they might have imagined. Brigham Young claimed to have received revelation from the Mormon god on more than one occasion. It is important to realize that “the man of God,” whether he declares: “thus saith the Lord” or not, he claims to be God’s representative on earth. Ezra Taft Benson, Prophet and President of the LDS Church, could not have made it clearer when he said: “The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in EVERYTHING—we are to give heed unto all of his words as if from the Lord’s own mouth⁶⁰⁰.”

MORMON “PROPHETS” AND MEN ON THE MOON

Turning back the pages of history to the inspired times of 1837, we are faced with a an interesting revelation. Oliver Huntington wrote in his journal that bizarre concepts of the universe were held not only by Joseph Smith, but by his father as well.

Astronomers and philosophers have, from time almost immemorial until very recently, asserted that the moon was uninhabited, that it had no atmosphere, etc. But recent discoveries, through the means of powerful telescopes, have given scientists a doubt or two upon the old theory.

Nearly all the great discoveries of men in the last half century have, in one way or another, either directly or indirectly, contributed to prove Joseph Smith to be a Prophet.

⁵⁹⁸ Statement by President Wilford Woodruff, as cited in *Priesthood and Presidency*, by Charles W. Penrose, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁹ Among them are: “Joseph Smith III’s 1848 *Blessing and the Mormons of Utah*,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Summer 1982 pp. 69-90; *Sunstone*, The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844, BYU Studies, Vol. 16, No. 2, Winter 1976, pp. 187-233 or *Joseph Smith’s Successor*, Utah Lighthouse, SLC, 1981, 31 pages.

⁶⁰⁰ BYU Student Conference, Feb 26, 1980, Marriott Center.

As far back as 1837, I know that he said the MOON WAS INHABITED by men and women the same as this earth, and that they lived to a greater age than we do, that they live generally to near the age of a 1,000 years.

He described the men as averaging near six feet in height, and dressing quite informally in something near the Quaker style.

In my Patriarchal blessing, given by the father of Joseph the Prophet, in Kirtland, 1837, I was told that I should preach the gospel before I was 21 years of age, that I should preach the gospel to the inhabitants upon the islands of the sea, and-to the INHABITANTS OF THE MOON, even the planet you can now behold with your eyes⁶⁰¹.

Oliver Huntington was indeed a visionary. Few people, then or now, could envision the inhabitants of the moon being preached to. While Paul preached on Mars Hill, it was probably within the mind of Joseph Smith the he should preach on Mars itself.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOON are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being about 6 feet in height. "They dress very much like the Quaker style and are quite general in style, or fashion of dress. "They live to be very old; coming generally, near a thousand years. "This is the description of them as GIVEN BY JOSEPH THE SEER, and he could 'See' whatever he asked the father in the name of Jesus to see⁶⁰².

From comments made April 27, 1843 by Hyrum Smith, brother of the prophet, Joseph and recorded in the Nauvoo Journal of George Laub:

...if there are meny (sic) worlds then there must be meny (sic) gods, for every Star that we see is a world and is inhabited the same as this world is peopled. The Sun and the Moon is inhabited.⁶⁰³..

On July 24, 1870, Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, made this statement:

Who can tell us of the INHABITANTS of this little planet that shines of an evening called the MOON?... when you inquire about the INHABITANTS of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the INHABITANTS OF THE SUN. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? NO QUESTION OF IT; IT WAS NOT MADE IN VAIN⁶⁰⁴. [editors' emphasis]

Did these prophets speak for the Lord when they made their investigation of the cosmos, the creation of God? Or did they get carried away with the opportunity to make startling statements? Whatever their reasons for educating the masses in matters of cosmology, the revelation of these statements serve as a source of embarrassment to the Church to this day.

PROPHETS FOR PROFIT

Questions invariably arise in the minds of non-Mormons about the vast wealth of the Mormon church. The issue is not so much where the money comes from as to where and who it goes to. Anyone astute person listening to the radio, watching television or reading the printed word will become aware of a subtle assault on the mind. Many churches advertise in an attempt to attract the faithful. None has perfected their advertising skills to a more honed edge than the LDS Church. As long ago as 1983, the Mormons tried to improve their image with a \$12 million advertising campaign in Reader's Digest⁶⁰⁵. The major emphasis is to project them in a favorable light, most often as protectors of the family. Most recently, in an attempt to cater to the environmental crowd, they are now the protectors of the environment. No other church has come close to the advertising expenditures of the Mormons. The

⁶⁰¹ *The Young Woman's Journal* published by the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations of Zion, 1892, Vol. 3, pp. 263-264.

⁶⁰² *Journal of Oliver B. Huntington* Vol. 3, page 166 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society.

⁶⁰³ Brigham Young University Studies, Winter 1978, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 177.

⁶⁰⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 271.

⁶⁰⁵ *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 8, 1983, pg. 1.

Church is also in another class by itself. Of all the major denominations in America, the Mormon church is the only one to NOT publicly publish their financial activity each year⁶⁰⁶.

FOUR MILLION \$/DAY?

And what is the Mormon Church's wealth? Because of the Mormon Leaders' secrecy, we can only guess. But there is ample information to give us an idea. And what an idea! The front page of The Wall Street Journal of Nov. 9, 1983 reports the Church's YEARLY budget at approximately \$1.5 BILLION. It also estimated assets at about \$5 BILLION. Where does the Church receive all this income from? Well, a good share of it comes from tithing. Each faithful Mormon pays 10% of his or her gross income as a tithe. In addition there is income generated by the businesses either owned by, or controlled by or invested in by the Church. A good estimation of the LDS income, back in 1983, shows approximately \$550 million in tax-exempt contributions and some \$450 million in business income. Business income? Sure, including income from \$237 million in sales by Utah-Idaho, Inc., in which the Church has controlling interest; \$57 million from the Church's five department stores; \$16 million from its Deseret News newspaper operation; some \$79 million three wholly owned insurance companies; \$4 million from KSL television plus millions more from its other TV station in Seattle and its eleven radio stations; \$10 million each from Deseret Press and Deseret Book; \$6 million from Hotel Utah, etc., etc., etc.⁶⁰⁷

ADDITIONAL REAL ESTATE

In addition, the Mormon Church owns substantial amounts of real estate from a 260,000 acre ranch near Disney World in Florida to a 36 story apartment building in New York City, and dozens of commercial buildings in Salt Lake City. The Church owns the nation's largest private university, Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah as well as a campus in Hawaii and Ricks college in Idaho.

It also owns Deseret Trust Co. which has received more than \$47 million in donations from wealthy members and non-members. And the list continues to grow. For example, the Church out bid Texas oil man Bunker Hunt for a 2,755 acre tobacco farm (it will raise wheat and corn) in Hopkinsville for \$4,275,000⁶⁰⁸. So, you see the "Church" is not doing too bad financially.

LEADERS' INCOME

Now, what about the Church Leaders? In a letter dated June 17, 1977 Apostle Mark E. Peterson wrote: "You ask if we receive 'a very good salary.' We receive no salary at all...(we) do receive a very modest living allowance..." However they describe it, they do "get by" while serving the church (the Lord?) as Presidents and Apostles of the Mormon Church. They do it by receiving a "small living allowance" and by appointing each other to the boards of directors of the many companies owned by the Church. To get an idea of just how these men dedicated to the Lord, operate let's return to 1903. Utah's new Senator, Reed Smoot's seat was being challenged in congress, for several reasons, including the continual practice of polygamy by the Mormon Leaders and the blood oath sworn in the temples against the United States⁶⁰⁹.

THE PRESIDENT OF WHAT?

During these hearings which lasted over 30 months, then Mormon Church President Joseph F. Smith, gave the following testimony, under oath:

Mr. Tayler: What is your business?

Mr. Smith: My principle business is that of president of the church.

Mr. Tayler: In what other business are you engaged?

Mr. Smith: I am engaged in numerous other businesses.

Mr. Tayler: What?

Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution.

Mr. Tayler: Of what other corporations are you an officer?

Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of the State Bank of Utah, another institution.

Mr. Tayler: What else?

⁶⁰⁶ Yearbook of American Churches, 1983 ed.

⁶⁰⁷ Utah Holiday Magazine, March 22, 1976.

⁶⁰⁸ Salt Lake Tribune, Sept. 17, 1980.

⁶⁰⁹ The Reed Smoot Case, Vol. 2, pp. 77-79, 759.

Mr. Smith: Zions Savings Bank and Trust Company.
 Mr. Tayler: What else?
 Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of the Utah Sugar Company.
 Mr. Tayler: What else?
 Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of the Consolidated Wagon and Machine Company.
 Mr. Tayler: What else?
 Mr. Smith: There are several other SMALL institutions with which I am associated.
 Mr. Tayler: Are you associated with the Utah Light and Power Company?
 Mr. Smith: I am. Mr. Tayler: In what capacity?
 Mr. Smith: I am director and PRESIDENT..
 Mr. Tayler: A director and the president?
 Mr. Smith: Yes, sir.
 Mr. Tayler: Had you that in mind when you classified the others as small concerns?
 Mr. Smith: No, Sir, I had not that in mind.
 Mr. Tayler: That is a large concern?
 Mr. Smith: That is a large concern.
 Mr. Tayler: Are you an officer of the Salt Lake and Los Angeles Railroad Company?
 Mr. Smith: I am.
 Mr. Tayler: What?
 Mr. Smith: PRESIDENT and director....
 Mr. Tayler: Of what else are you PRESIDENT?
 Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of the Salt Air Beach Company.
 Mr. Tayler: What else, if you can recall?
 Mr. Smith: I DO NOT RECALL JUST NOW ...
 Mr. Tayler: What relation do you sustain to the Idaho Sugar Company?
 Mr. Smith: I am director of that company and also the PRESIDENT of it.
 Mr. Tayler: Of the Inland Crystal Salt Company?
 Mr. Smith: Also the SAME POSITION there.
 Mr. Tayler: The Salt Lake Dramatic Association?
 Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of that and also a director.
 Mr. Tayler: Are you president of any other corporation there?
 Mr. Smith: I do not know. Perhaps you can tell me. I do not remember any more just now.
 Mr. Tayler: It would seem that the number has grown so large that it would be undue tax upon your memory to charge you with naming them all....
 Mr. Tayler: What relation do you sustain to the Salt Lake Knitting Company? Did I ask you about it?
 Mr. Smith: No, Sir, you did not.
 Mr. Tayler: The Salt Lake Knitting Company?
 Mr. Smith: I am PRESIDENT of it, and also a director....
 Mr. Tayler: The Union Pacific Railway Company?
 Mr. Smith: I am a director....
 Mr. Tayler: Are you an official of any mining companies?
 Mr. Smith: Yes, sir.
 Mr. Tayler: What?
 Mr. Smith: I am the vice-president of the Bullion, Beck and Champion Mining Company.
 Mr. Tayler: The Deseret News?
 Mr. Smith: No, sir.
 Mr. Tayler: You have no business relation with that?
 Mr. Smith: No, sir.⁶¹⁰

Some time later Joseph F. Smith testified as follows:

Mr. Tayler: In what form does your church have title to the Deseret News property?
 Mr. Smith: It owns the deed.
 Mr. Tayler: Does it own the building?
 Mr. Smith: The press, yes. I would like to state that when I was asked that question before, Mr. Tayler, I was not aware of the fact that I have since learned from my counsel here that during the trusteeship of Lorenzo Snow that the Deseret News plant was transferred from the Deseret News Company to Lorenzo Snow, trustee, in trust..

⁶¹⁰ Reed Smoot Case, Vol. 1, pp. 81, 82, 83, 86, 87 and 88.

Mr. Tayler: So that it is now in you as trustee in trust...
*Mr. Smith: Now I OWN IT AS TRUSTEE IN TRUST.*⁶¹¹

THE LORD'S WORK PAYS

So how do the Leaders of the Church fare? Eleventh President of the Church, Harold B. Lee, left an estate worth almost \$711,000 when he died in December, 1973 and according to Salt Lake County probate files, tenth President Joseph Fielding Smith left a Utah estate valued at just short of \$1 million when he died in 1972⁶¹². In his unpublished dissertation for Yale University, Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn revealed many interesting things about the Mormon Leadership and their incomes stating that many of the Mormon Leaders (Apostles, etc.) were on the board of directors of non-church controlled companies. Why? "Many businesses that were not controlled by the church seemed to include General Authorities on boards of Directors because of the prestige these men lent to the organizations, rather than because of the amount of stock the man held, or his business acumen."

CHURCH LEADERS: "TRUST ME"

Sometimes this is disastrous for the trusting members who believe that their Leaders are always associated with legitimate businesses. In 1984, a Utah business was under indictment for fraud that may amount to more than 50 million dollars. Many members of the Mormon Church obtained second mortgages on their houses to invest in this business based on the presentation made by the business representatives who showed the potential investor a picture of the company's board of directors which included the current Mormon General Authority, Paul Dunn. Since the collapse of this business scheme, it has brought considerable embarrassment to the church⁶¹³. Just what a "General Authority" of the "Lords only true church" is doing lending his prestige to a promotion is anyone's guess. But it did have dire consequences for the some 600 people who second-mortgaged their homes to invest in it. And why would they do that? At least one person did it because his father told him, "If you can't trust our Apostles (sic) who can you trust?"⁶¹⁴ Actually, the Leaders of the Mormon Church have certainly NOT taken any vows of poverty. Again, from Mr. Quinn's dissertation "When Joseph Fielding Smith died, after a publication career that had begun even before his appointment as an Apostle in 1910, his uncollected royalties (apparently for a six month period) were \$9,636.48. Relatively few of the General Authorities obtained these indirect benefits, but membership in the Mormon hierarchy made such opportunities possible."⁶¹⁵

HOW CAN A PROPHET LIVE ON \$50 MILLION?

Nor is this anything new. In Appendix B of his biography Heber C. Kimball, Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer, Stanley B. Kimball states that Heber C. Kimball, who was a counselor to the Mormon Prophet Brigham Young, left an estate valued at \$100,580 which was the equivalent of more than \$2,000,000 in 1980 value. That's not too bad when you consider that Mr. Kimball while accumulating this \$2,000,000 estate, also was married to 43 wives, had 65 children and was a "prophet, seer, and revelator," not to mention "Apostle" of the "only true church." Still Mr. Kimball did not prosper nearly as much as the Prophet of 30 years, Brigham Young, who died, leaving an estate of (in 1980 dollars) \$50 million. "At his death, he (Brigham Young) was the wealthiest man in Utah, with an estate of approximately \$2.5 million which was embroiled in legal battles between his family and the Church for years afterward⁶¹⁶." By using the formula in the previously mentioned Heber C. Kimball biography, Brigham Young's wealth, while supporting 27 wives who bore his 56 children, and while acting as "The" prophet of the Lord on earth, managed to accumulate a \$50 million dollar estate. Even the next president of the Church, John Taylor had a special revelation regarding the intermixing of Brigham's own property, businesses, etc., with the Church's⁶¹⁷. It seems that Brigham Young took some liberties with Church funds. (Kind of makes you think that current Mormon Church Leaders would want to show current revenues and expenditures. What are they trying to hide anyway?) In the previously mentioned Yale Ph.D. dissertation, D. Michael Quinn wrote: "estate executor George Q. Cannon recorded in his Journal that members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were critical of Young's liberal use of church funds (even though some of that use may have been for church projects): 'Some of my brethren, as I have since learned since the death of the President Brigham Young, did have feelings concerning his course. They did not

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² *New West*, May 8, 1978, p. 39.

⁶¹³ *Utah Holiday Magazine*, cover story, March 1984)

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58

⁶¹⁵ D. Michael Quinn, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, May 1976, p. 133.

⁶¹⁶ Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker (BYU professor), *A Book of Mormons*, pg. 410:

⁶¹⁷ *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, compiled by Fred C. Collier, 1979, pg. 119.

approve of it, and felt opposed, and yet they dare not exhibit their feelings to him, he ruled with so strong and stiff a hand, and they felt it would be of no use. In a few words, the feeling seems to be that he transcended the bounds of authority which he legitimately held. I have been greatly surprised to find so much dissatisfaction in such quarters. It is felt that the funds of the Church have been used with a freedom not warranted by the authority which he held”

JOSEPH SMITH: PROPHET AND FINANCIAL COUNCILOR

But really, Brigham did nothing different than his mentor Joseph Smith did. Only Joseph was not nearly as successful as Brigham. It is almost sad in a way, when three BYU professors attempt to exonerate Joseph Smith from any wrong doing⁶¹⁸. It wasn't wrong, apparently, for Joseph and his colleagues to set up a bank in direct opposition to the law, in spite of the refusal for this scheme by the State of Ohio⁶¹⁹. The three authors fault the author of *No Man Knows My History* for putting Joseph's personal indebtedness at \$150,000 when they determine that it was only around \$102,000⁶²⁰. Remember that the average family's income was \$500/year⁶²¹. That would mean that Joseph was “only” in debt to a total equaling the annual income for 200 families year rather than 300 using Brodie's figure. Why was Joseph borrowing all this money? Well, he had “purchased” some 800 acres of land⁶²². Incidentally, the five largest purchases were on “credit.” He “bought” the land for around \$60 per acre, “...while an acre was typically sold for \$200 to \$500 unimproved⁶²³.” Why did land prices go up 580% between 1830 and 1837? (p. 411). Because the saints understood that this would be a gathering place. With the resulting speculation increasing prices. How was Joseph going to be bailed out? On April 6, 1837, the Mormon Prophet addressed some of his followers during which he said: “There are many causes of embarrassment, of a pecuniary nature now pressing upon the heads of the Church... they were to build a house for the Lord, and prepare for the gathering of the Saints. Thus it is easy to see this must (have) involved them (in financial difficulties) ... this place (Kirtland) had to be built up...we are indebted ...” But there was a way out, the prophet emphasized: “...but our brethren from abroad have only to come with their money, take out these contracts, relieve their brethren from the pecuniary embarrassments...”

THE PATHWAY TO THE RICH LIFE

Well so far, so good; so the prophet thought. And what was the incentive for all this cooperation as they built up the kingdom at Kirtland? The prophet continued: “This place must and will be built up, and every brother that will take hold and help discharge those contracts that have been made, SHALL BE RICH⁶²⁴.” How did this little drama all turn out? It depends on who you talk to. Joseph Smith explains that he and Sidney Rigdon “were obliged to flee... as did the Apostles and Prophets of old, and as Jesus said, ‘when they persecute you in one city, flee to another⁶²⁵.’ On the evening of the 12th of January, about ten o'clock, we left Kirtland, on horseback, to escape mob violence, which was about to burst upon us under the color of legal process to cover the hellish design of our enemies....”

The many people who were left holding the bag probably had a slightly different version than Joseph. Even the three BYU professors, in the previously mentioned 81-page article admit that, regarding the illegality of starting the bank in the first place: “Examination of the court records established that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were properly charged, tried by jury, and found to have violated the statute.... Notes issued for circulation were plainly in violation of the 1816 Act⁶²⁶.” In addition, the authors mention “... that during 1837-39 there were in the Geauga County Court, seventeen lawsuits against Joseph Smith for debt ... ten resulted in judgments against Joseph Smith...⁶²⁷” What was the “bottom line?” We're told that “Available evidence also indicates that Mormon investors may have lost... an average loss of approximately a quarter of their annual income⁶²⁸.”

WHY START A BANK? WHY NOT?

⁶¹⁸ *Sunstone*, BYU Studies, Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1977, pp. 391-472.

⁶¹⁹ *Documentary History of the Church* 2:468

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 416

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 396

⁶²² *Ibid.*, p. 426

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, p. 426

⁶²⁴ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 478-479.

⁶²⁵ *Pearl of Great Price: Joseph Smith History*, Vol. 3 pg. 1.

⁶²⁶ *Sunstone*, BYU Studies, Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1977, pp. 438.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg.. 419.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 460.

Perhaps a most interesting analysis made by the authors surfaces in their answers to their own question: “Considering the serious impact as Church and civic leader in Kirtland, one wonders why he went ahead with the bank after it was apparent that it would not receive a charter. Perhaps the following may help explain his decision. The writers then give three possible reasons for Joseph’s involvement in such an illegal scheme. The first two fall under the category of the ‘devil made me do it.’ Specifically, they say “First,... he received encouragement to defy the anti-banking legislature by some anti-Democratic newspapers and political groups. Second, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and others directly involved were closely counseled by lawyers...” But you may want to closely examine their third reason for Joseph Smith starting an illegal bank and scheme that lost so much of his fellow Mormons’ money. The three BYU professors state: “Third, there were significant financial incentives for Joseph Smith to do all he possibly could to convert the institution into a successful bank By April 1837, his financial problems must have been apparent and burdensome. A bank, in addition to enhancing his material wealth, would have helped him meet his cash flow problems by converting his wealth in land into more liquid notes needed to meet demands by his creditors⁶²⁹.” Incidentally, how did Joseph manage to escape that “mobocracy” who had “hellish designs” on him. He actually tells us that: “About January 16, 1838, being destitute of money to pursue my journey....” He ran into Brigham Young who related that a Brother Tomlinson was having trouble selling his land but that if he would follow counsel he would sell, which he did in three days. “Brother Brigham told him that this was a manifestation of the hand of the Lord to deliver Brother Joseph Smith from his present necessities. Brother Brigham’s promise was soon verified, and I got three hundred dollars from Brother Tomlinson, which enabled me to pursue my journey⁶³⁰.”

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE GOOD LIFE

“In 1842, Joseph had built a handsome two-story frame house called the Mansion House and had moved in with his family sometime after 1843.... During the summer of 1843, Joseph added a spacious two-story wing on the back of the Mansion with a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor and ten bedrooms upstairs. He built a stable large enough for seventy-five horses. Emma went to St. Louis to buy furniture, china, linens and utensils. A new red carpet from St. Louis, a chandelier of glittering prisms and marble-topped tables were installed in the Mansion⁶³¹.” This was the good life. By 1844 Joseph seemed to be riding pretty high. What was his own view of himself? In his own words, recorded in his own history, in a speech given one month and one day before he was killed, Joseph, “The Mormon Prophet” had this self assessment:

“I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-Day Saints never ran away from me, yet⁶³².”

Does this sound like a prophet of God? It would appear that Joseph Smith sealed his own fate by this boast. Consider the following:

For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him⁶³³.

Did Joseph begin to believe his own “press announcements”? In her expected sympathetic biography of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, Mormon writer Donna Hill (with help from her brother, BYU professor Marvin S. Hill, see her “Acknowledgments”) we read of early 1844: “Besides being candidate for the highest office in the land, he was mayor, judge of the municipal court, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, trustee-in-trust of the church, steamboat owner, real estate agent, husband of a number of women and leader of the earthly kingdom of God⁶³⁴.”

JOSEPH’S SECRETS

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 456-457.

⁶³⁰ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 2.

⁶³¹ Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith The First Mormon*, p. 373.

⁶³² *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 6, pp. 408-09.

⁶³³ *Doctrines and Covenants*, Sect. 3:4

⁶³⁴ Hill, *Ibid.*, p. 387

Like the elements in a Grecian play, the world of Joseph was moving towards a conclusion that would allow his followers to proclaim him a “martyr” and set the stage for the Mormons to move west. Because of Joseph’s egotism and his deception, more and more of both his followers and non-Mormons in the area were becoming alarmed.

POLYGAMY?

There was all that talk about spiritual wifeism and Joseph taking young girls in polygamy. Was it so? In characteristic duplicity, the “prophet” assured his followers in a Sunday sermon one month before his death (and AFTER having taken 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19 year old girls as ‘celestial wives’): “What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one⁶³⁵.” Joseph was denying the practice TO HIS OWN FOLLOWERS except the few “trusted” ones he had introduced it to. But you don’t keep a thing like that quiet and rumors were beginning to circulate.

KING?

Another major problem was that the word had leaked out (in spite of sworn silence of the actual participants) that Joseph had been ordained “King” of the Kingdom of God over the whole earth. That was enough to alarm a lot of people when they learned of the secret oaths and plans of Joseph’s secret “Council of Fifty”. Even writer Hill admits: “On March 11, 1844, Joseph began the formal organization of his special council. Benjamin F. Johnson wrote that the council was “a select circle of the Prophet’s most trusted friends, including the Twelve (Apostles) but not all of the constituted authorities of the Church.” According to George Miller, who was an early member of the council and Presiding Bishop of the Church at the time of Joseph’s death, the organization was accomplished over a period of time. Miller wrote:

“Joseph said to me... we will call together some of our wise men and proceed to set up the kingdom of God by organizing some of its officers. And from day to day he called some of the brethren about him, organizing them as princes in the kingdom of God, TO PRESIDE OVER THE CHIEF CITIES OF THE NATION, until the number of fifty-three were called. In this council we ordained Joseph Smith as King on earth⁶³⁶.”

Incidentally, two subsequent “prophets” of the Mormon Church were also, later, ordained “King.”

THE FINAL 20 DAYS

How did all this come to a head? One of the prophet’s former supporters, who had also been his second counselor for the previous two years, William Law “became displeased with Joseph’s control of real estate and his threat to excommunicate any who bought land without his approval... He came to believe that Joseph was using Nauvoo House donations to buy land and sell it to converts at a profit⁶³⁷.” When Law got a grand jury in nearby Carthage to indict Joseph for adultery and polygamy, Joseph gave a Sunday speech saying that Law “has gone to Carthage and swore that I told him that I was guilty of adultery. This spiritual wifeism! Why, a man dares not speak or wink, for fear of being accused of this.... I am the same man, and as innocent as I was fourteen years ago; and can prove them all perjurers...⁶³⁸” Did the “prophet, ever outright lie? Do his present day followers continue to protect him? Consider that in the above quote from Hill’s biography, the IMMEDIATE sentence in Joseph’s Sunday Sermon before “I am the same man...” and which was omitted by Hill, reads: “What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one⁶³⁹.” But then, we really don’t expect a FULL airing of some laundry, do we? Back to our story. In general, people were getting very upset with the prophet’s power, control and duplicity concerning polygamy.

A NEWSPAPER “OPENS”

These dissenters, some former followers, procured a press and announced that they would publish a paper exposing the prophet. The first (and only) edition of this paper, the Nauvoo Expositor, came off the press on June 7, 1844. In Hill’s words: “In their newspaper the collaborators complained of Joseph’s control of the land in and around Nauvoo and accused him of abusing the rights of the Nauvoo charters. They decried his political aspirations, saying that they

⁶³⁵ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 411

⁶³⁶ Hill Op. cit. p. 368.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

⁶³⁹ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 411

did not believe God ever raised a prophet to Christianize the world by political intrigue⁶⁴⁰.” What do you suppose was the reaction to those who read the paper? “Distributed throughout Nauvoo, the Expositor caused an immediate furor among the faithful who were practicing, or knew about, polygamy as well as among those WHO STILL BELIEVED THAT POLYGAMY WAS A FALSE RUMOR⁶⁴¹.” emphasis added)

AND A NEWSPAPER” CLOSES”

Well, what would you do if you were the prophet? In classic understatement, Hill observes: “Joseph found himself in an alarming situation. His tolerance of such enemies in the midst of the Saints and the continued publication of their newspaper would disrupt the harmony of his religious community, endanger his candidacy for the highest office in the land, threaten the establishment of the political kingdom of God and in short dash all his dearest hopes⁶⁴².” So WHAT DID JOSEPH DO? He did what any law abiding, honest, truth loving American would do. In his capacity as Mayor of Nauvoo, he simply declared the newspaper a public “nuisance” and ordered the Nauvoo Legion to destroy it. They did. At 8:00 p.m., June 10th⁶⁴³. Please understand that this alarmed the non-Mormons in the area.

WOULD YOU BE ALARMED?

Why would non-Mormons be alarmed? Consider this. At that time, Nauvoo was three times larger than Chicago, and according to a text prepared for Mormon high school students, it was “possessing a legion of Soldiers, the finest trained militia in America⁶⁴⁴.” Are you getting the picture? The neighboring non-Mormon newspapers are decrying this “prophet” who has been ordained king and simply goes out and destroys a public newspaper that exposed his duplicity. And on the 18th, this “king” is addressing “the finest trained militia in America” with (remember Jonestown?) the following: “... Will you all stand by me to the death, and sustain at the peril of your lives,... may the thunders of the Almighty and the forked lightnings of heaven and pestilence, and war and bloodshed come down on those ungodly men who seek to destroy my life and the lives of this innocent people⁶⁴⁵.” Joseph had ordered the Legion to dig trenches and the non-Mormons were drilling four hours a day⁶⁴⁶. Everyone was getting upset and each side thought the other was preparing to annihilate the other.

A SOLUTION CONSIDERED

What to do? At last Joseph thought of a solution. If he and Hyrum left, the non-Mormons wouldn’t hurt the Saints, would they?⁶⁴⁷ Joseph and Hyrum fled across the Mississippi leaving instructions for he and Hyrum’s families and effects to be taken down river. He would go West. But he discovered that Emma wasn’t going. The city was in turmoil and his followers were accusing him of cowardice. Hill tells us: “For perhaps the only time in his life Joseph deferred to Hyrum. ‘Brother Hyrum, you are the oldest, what shall we do?’ Hyrum, always a man of strong and simple convictions, saw only one course. ‘Let us go back and give our selves up⁶⁴⁸.’” Joseph and Hyrum subsequently went to Carthage to stand trial.

Joseph Smith made his last major boast on May 26, 1844⁶⁴⁹. On June 27, 1844, he was dead. Contrary to what Mormon history has taught, he did not die as a martyr. He died in a blazing gun battle, murdered by a cowardly, vigilante mob who took the law into their own hands and who gave the “Saints” their martyrs “for the truth.” Joseph Smith had a six-barreled revolver which he fired at the mob coming up the stairs. Three of the barrels fired. Two men were killed and one man was wounded (and probably died later according to history) by Joseph Smith. A martyr does not go out in a blazing gun battle⁶⁵⁰.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 393

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, pg. 393.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁶⁴⁴ Berrett, *The Restored Church*, 1965 ed., p. 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Hill, *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

⁶⁴⁹ *Doctrines and Covenants*, Sect. 3:4

⁶⁵⁰ B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, pages 284-285.

CHAPTER 6

MORMON DOCTRINE - USE PENCIL ONLY

Much of the material in the previous chapters may be glossed over by hard core, “burning in the bosom,” temple Mormons. With recent admonitions from Prophets and Apostles that ONLY the living prophet has anything worthwhile believing, it should be an easy matter to consign past history to the Mormon “memory hole,” that black pit where suspect, incriminating and damaging evidence is relegated. Indeed, Ezra Taft Benson has said: “The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works⁶⁵¹.” One wonders if a new definition of the word “standard” has been contemplated by the leaders. Benson also quoted Brigham Young whom he credits as saying “When compared with the living oracles, those books are nothing to me; I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in these books.” This is a rather convenient way to achieve mind control. It conveniently invalidates anything that conflicts with current thought. If a serious Mormon scholar might say: “But Joseph Smith said.....” he is immediately confronted with Mormon “new speak” which abolishes all previous knowledge.

Ed Decker has spoken before about the massive complexities of the Mormon scriptures and how it is somewhat akin to the frustration one might feel trying to rewind a pickup load of tangled fishing line. While the Mormon scriptures are highly convoluted and in many cases, quite bizarre, their doctrines and concepts fall into a class all by themselves. As in the case of many cults, the key theme is denial and distortion of existing orthodoxy.

The Mormons have never really had to confront their doctrines in the light of integrated documents that can be measured by simple “scriptural test” procedures. The average Mormon only sees church scripture in the logical context of classroom references within the rigid teaching structure of the LDS instruction manuals.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE DENIED

The Mormon is taught to unequivocally accept the LDS scriptures as the pure word of God, without error or inconsistency. The Bible, the only real standard by which any doctrine can be tested, is then discredited, cutting the LDS scriptures loose from any Biblical accountability. The only acceptable measurement for LDS scripture is the LDS scripture itself and that has already been given the fullest approval of an “infallible present-day prophet.” There is no margin for the application of generally accepted scholarship. How does one sidestep the theological double talk when faced with statements like: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God.” (*Pearl of Great Price*, Articles of Faith, article 8.)

Mormonism teaches that there are several problems with the Bible. First, many of its books are missing, so it is only an incomplete compilation at best. Second, we are told that many plain and precious things were taken away from the Bible by that “great and abominable church,” as recorded in I Nephi 13:25-28. The very document requiring Biblical testing discredits its only credible witness!

The final severance from Biblical accountability is the continued LDS teaching that what was left of the scriptures has been so often and badly translated that our present Bible is of almost no “stand alone” value. Apostle Orson Pratt summed up the LDS position when he stated “..... and who, in his right mind, could for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?”⁶⁵²

⁶⁵¹ BYU Student Conference, Feb 26, 1980.

⁶⁵² Orson Pratt, *The Bible Alone An Insufficient Guide*, Early LDS Pamphlet, pages 44-47.

Joseph Smith taught, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.”⁶⁵³ Bruce R. McConkie, seeking to explain away the inconsistencies of Mormon doctrine with biblical teaching said: “Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors-many plain and precious things were deleted, in consequence of which error and falsehood poured into the various churches. One of the great heresies of modern Christendom is the unfounded assumption that the Bible contains all of the inspired teachings now extant among men.”⁶⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that McConkie parroted what Joseph Smith had said earlier and was demonstrating the exact same method of historic revisionism that Mormon leaders have used for over a century.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The Bible says of itself that God’s Word therein will stand forever. (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25). Paul, speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells the believer:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [read: complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Tim 3:16-17)

It might be interesting to ask the Mormon to show you exactly where the errors exist. Since most of the doctrines added by Mormonism are not in the *Book of Mormon* either (which is claimed to contain the “fullness of the everlasting gospel”), the “plain and precious things” did not make it in there either!

What we end up with is a set of spiritual laws that force the LDS people to judge their scripture by their own measure of faith and not by any outside influence. Even when there is an obvious contradiction with the LDS scripture and what is being taught by the present prophet, the Mormon cannot judge or test the prophet by the scripture. According to former LDS General Authority and President of the Council of The Twelve, and now Prophet and President, Ezra Taft Benson, the LDS doctrine is that the living prophet is above scripture. There is absolutely no way out. The finality of the Mormon theology is not based upon evaluation by scriptural evidence, but based entirely upon a “burning in the bosom.” Again, LDS Scripture demands this final proof of itself and tells you this is what you must seek. In a word of admonition to Oliver Cowdery during the translation of the *Book of Mormon*, the Mormon god, through Joseph Smith, declared,

*But behold, I say unto you that you must study it out in your own mind; then you must ask me if it is right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong....”*⁶⁵⁵

When the Mormon missionaries come into a home, they will talk about the prophet Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon* and will instruct the investigator to read the *Book of Mormon* and to pray about it. They will encourage the reader to seek that divine “burning in the bosom” which will prove that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and the *Book of Mormon* is really scripture. Moroni 10:4 will be quoted, “And when you have received these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Notwithstanding the fact that the sentence structure has the response triggered as an answer that “these things are NOT true,” the missionary use of the quote is to put the burden of proof on the investigator’s sincere heart and real intent. The investigator will feel good about it. It all becomes a subjective evaluation. The scripture and prophet are not to be tested. They are to be prayed about and this divine burning in the bosom will be the proof that they are delivering divine truth to you from God.

We have studied Joseph Smith, man with an imagination. We learned further of Joseph Smith the money-digger and Joseph Smith the “Prophet, Seer and Revelator.” We have a better idea of how Mormon scripture came to be through the hand of Joseph Smith. What did Joseph think of himself? What did his contemporaries think of him. More important, what is taught of him today? Here are a few of these important milestones.

OUR SALVATION THROUGH JOSEPH SMITH

⁶⁵³ Joseph F. Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, page 327.

⁶⁵⁴ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 82, 83.

⁶⁵⁵ *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 9:8-9.

If we get our salvation, we shall have to pass by him [Joseph Smith]; if we enter our glory, it will through the authority that he has received. We cannot not to be tested. The doctrines are get around him⁶⁵⁶.

WHORING AFTER OTHER GODS

And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. (Judges 2:17)

When a thinking person considers the many prophecies given to Joseph Smith, one thorny question is posed. The first question that comes to mind is what kind of god can be so wrong in regard to men and matters. Could the holy and righteous God of the Bible be wrong so many times when it came to the instructions He gave His prophet? One is reminded of the god of Baal that was made sport of by Elijah.

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. (1 Kings 18:27)

The Bible testifies to the character of God in countless numbers of ways. The only explanation for the Mormon god's laughable "thus saiths" is that he is another god. What is the Mormon's concept of God? Is he the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of the Bible? Either the Mormon conforms to the God of the Bible or he is another god entirely. There is no other choice!

1830: GOD IS A SPIRIT

In an unusual (for a Mormon writer) ten page article in the July/August 1980 issue of Sunstone Magazine, Brigham Young University professor Thomas G. Alexander discusses the development of Mormon Theology under the title "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: from Joseph Smith to progressive theology." This article points out that:

"What is not so apparent is that before 1835 the LDS doctrines on God and man were quite close to those of contemporary Protestant denominations⁶⁵⁷."

Professor Alexander further states that studying the available history of the church up to 1835:

"... will further demonstrate that the doctrine of God preached and believed before 1835 was essentially Trinitarian, with God the Father seen as an absolute personage of spirit, Jesus Christ as a personage of tabernacle, and the Holy Ghost as an impersonal spiritual member of the Godhead⁶⁵⁸."

Professor Alexander's article points out that it was Apostle James E. Talmadge who reconsidered and reconstructed the doctrine of the Holy Cross.

To contrast the new belief in the Holy Ghost we only need to remember what Orson Pratt, himself an apostle and one who intimately knew the young Mormon Prophet Joseph, said sixty years prior to Talmadge's new definition of the Holy Ghost. Said apostle Pratt in a sermon in 1855:

"I am inclined to think from some things in the revelations, that there is such a being as a personal Holy Ghost, but it is not set forth as a positive fact, and the Lord has never given me any revelation upon the subject, and consequently I cannot fully make up my mind one way or the other⁶⁵⁹."

This development of Joseph's theology concerning God can be easily seen by comparing the contents of the "Lectures on Faith" first included in the 1835 edition of the Doctrines and Covenants and the description of God given nine years later by the prophet on April 7th, 1844 during his most famous sermon, the King Follett Discourses. The Lectures on Faith were seven lessons prepared for use in the School of Elders, conducted in

⁶⁵⁶ Come Unto Christ, Melchizedek Priesthood Manual, 1984, pp. 126-132.

⁶⁵⁷ Sunstone Magazine, BYU Studies, July/August 1980, The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology, Thomas G. Alexander. pg. 24.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 25.

⁶⁵⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2:338.

Kirtland, Ohio during the winter of 1834-35 and comprised of the Doctrines and Covenants. In Lecture Five we find the following:

We shall, in this lecture speak of the Godhead: we mean the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are two personages who constitute the great matchless, governing and supreme power over all things... they are the Father and the Son: the Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power possessing all perfection and fullness: the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle.

Again,

Q. How many personages are there in the Godhead?

A. Two, the Father and the Son. And we read of the Holy Spirit.

Q. Do the Father and the Son possess the same mind?

A. They do...

Q. What is this mind?

A. The Holy Spirit.

Q. Do the Father, Son and Holy Spirit constitute the Godhead?

A. They do.

Thus Joseph taught that God the Father was a personage of Spirit, that the Son was a personage of tabernacle (he had a body) and the Holy Spirit was the “mind” that both the Father and the Son possess. The Lecture then asks:

Q. Does the foregoing account of the Godhead lay a sure foundation for the exercise of faith in him unto life and salvation?

A. It does.

BY 1843, GOD HAS A BODY

Why were the Lectures removed from the Doctrines and Covenants published in 1921? Ask the missionaries. Most likely because they raised more questions than they answered. They were reflective of Joseph’s doctrine in 1835. By 1843 Joseph provided some items of instruction which were to become section 130 of the Doctrines and Covenants which states:

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit”⁶⁶⁰

Where was Joseph’s evolution of God leading? Just three months before his murder he integrated his developed theology in one significant sermon. As Mormon writer Van Hale wrote in his 17 page article titled “The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse⁶⁶¹” that:

*Joseph took the stand at 3:15 pm Sunday, April 7, 1844 and delivered the most controversial sermon of his life, unparalleled in Mormonism in historical and doctrinal significance.*⁶⁶²

What did Joseph say? You can read a compilation of three scribes of the full sermon which has been published in the same issue of BYU Studies that Mr. Hale’s article comes from.⁶⁶³ Limited space prohibits inclusion here. However, Mr. Hale summarizes the four primary concepts from the King Follett discourse as follows⁶⁶⁴:

⁶⁶⁰ *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 130:22

⁶⁶¹ *BYU Studies*, Winter 1978, Vol. 18, no. 2.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

1. Men can become gods,
2. There exist many gods,
3. The gods exist one above the other innumerably, and...
4. God was once as man now is.

So Joseph's god is now a resurrected man with a body of flesh and bones in direct conflict with his earlier teachings in the Lectures on Faith which taught that God is a Spirit. Writer Van Hale must have done exhaustive research for his article (aside from his some seventy-three footnotes). He is to be congratulated. His research includes the views of the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt who was a contemporary of Joseph's and a most prolific Mormon Writer. (And who, incidentally, in an article in Dialogue, Vol. 15, No. 3 Autumn 1982 is called "Father of Mormon Pamphleteering" by Brigham Young University professor Peter Crawley who lists some thirty-one written works by Parley P. Pratt and states that he "all but single-handedly, invented Mormon bookwriting" In Apostle Pratt's tract⁶⁶⁵, we find:

Whoever reads our books, or hears us preach, knows that we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as one God. That the Son has flesh and bones, and the Father is a spirit. But we would inform Mr. H. that a personage of Spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, and that it is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones; hence it is said that Jesus is the express image of his (the Father's) person.

Mormon writer Hale adds this obvious, but very important thought:

This represents at least Pratt's understanding of Mormon doctrine on the Godhead in 1840⁶⁶⁶.

THE NATURE OF GOD

Mormons make their first mistake by trying to put God in a box. They disregard His eternal nature and the fact that He has never been, is not now and will never be anything other than a spirit being. The Bible clarifies that point when it says: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) However, the Mormons teach:

God was once a mortal man. He lived on a planet like our own. He experienced conditions similar to our own and advanced step by step⁶⁶⁷.

Late LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie wrote [quoting Joseph Smith]: "Further, as the Prophet also taught, there is a god above the father of our Lord Jesus Christ...If Jesus Christ was the son of God, and John discovered that God, the Father of Jesus Christ had a father also ... Was there ever a son without a father?"⁶⁶⁸

"What you are saying is that God became God by obedience to the Gospel program, which culminates in eternal marriage? [answer] Yes."⁶⁶⁹

"God is now an exalted man with powers of eternal increase. He lives in an exalted Marriage relationship."⁶⁷⁰

"We are the literal Children of God, a part of his family unit. We lived with our heavenly parents before coming to earth."⁶⁷¹

"... giving birth to spirit children and setting them on the mad to exaltation. And if this is to be done, you must have an exalted man and an exalted woman."⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁵ Parley Pratt, *An Answer to Mr. William Hewett's Tract*, 1840, pg. 9.

⁶⁶⁶ BYU Studies, Winter 1978, p. 219

⁶⁶⁷ *Achieving Celestial Marriage Manual* (ACCM), p. 129.

⁶⁶⁸ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.322.

⁶⁶⁹ ACCM, p.3.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 129-130.

“God continues to progress, as his creations expand and his spirit offspring multiply.”⁶⁷³

MORMON GOD’S LIMITATION

In every conceivable manner, the Mormons have put God in a box where He is unable to function as the Bible tells us that He does. The higher the Mormon climbs the celestial ladder toward godhood, the smaller and more ineffective his god becomes.

“The universe is filled with vast numbers of intelligences, and we further learn that Elohim is God simply because all of these intelligences honor and sustain him as such if He should ever do anything to violate the confidence or ‘sense of justice’ of these intelligences, they would promptly withdraw their support, and the ‘power’ of God would disintegrate He would cease to be God.”⁶⁷⁴

“If God possesses a form, that form is of necessity of definite proportions. and therefore of limited extension and space. It is impossible for Him to occupy at one time more than one space of such limits.”⁶⁷⁵

BEAM ME UP TO KOLOB, SCOTTY

As farfetched as these teachings might seem, the abode of the Heavenly Father is even more outlandish. We are harkened back to the beliefs of the Prophet and Cosmologist, Joseph Smith and his moon people to recognize that he had a strange fascination with outer space. While the Bible give no hint as to the physical location of heaven other than to indicate that it is far, far above us, Joseph Smith was able to pinpoint the location to a single star with an eastern European-sounding name.

“And I saw stars, that they were very great and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God.... And the Lord said unto me: the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for I am the Lord thy God.... therefore Kolob is the greatest of all the Kokaubeam [stars] that thou hast seen, because it is nearest unto me....” Moses 3:3,5,13,16 (Pearl of Great Price)

And so it continues. There is no record of Abraham, the recipient of this divulgence, ever having spoken King James English. Had he been as proficient as the great being of Kolob he would have probably responded with something like: “What weed dost thou smoketh?” The great secrets of the universe, locked up in the mummy papyrus, now on tour for a limited time only. What manner of theological doctrine are we dealing with? The question of how rational human beings can accept this kind of doctrine without question is the true mystery.

HOW MANY GODS? MILLIONS AND MILLIONS!

Again, the Bible is quite explicit when it describes the unique person of God. God’s ten commandments are quite unequivocal when describing His jealous nature. There is little left to the imagination when He says: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3)

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: (Mark 12:32)

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (James 2:19)

If the devils do indeed believe that there is one God, who is responsible for the doctrine of a plurality of Gods within the Mormon faith? If God commands his creation to believe only in Him, where did the deviation occur?

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁷³ McConkie, p.239)

⁶⁷⁴ W. Cleon Skousen (BYU Professor and Founder of Mormon-based Freeman Institute), *The First 2000 Years*, p. 355.

⁶⁷⁵ James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 43.

“In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods.”⁶⁷⁶

WHAT’S GOING ON UP THERE?

The god of Mormonism was born as a baby on another world. He grew up, got baptized by one holding the proper authority, got married in the temple for time and all eternity (probably to more than one wife), had many children, was obedient to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel and eventually died. Because of his obedience and faithfulness and by the Law of Eternal Progression he was Exalted and became god. If you know anything about Mormon doctrine you know that this is the god of Mormonism. His name is Elohim (or Ahman) and he lives on a planet (or star) nearest the planet Kolob. He is a glorified, resurrected, exalted man having a tangible body of flesh and bones⁶⁷⁷.

The grotesque origin and habitat of the Creator is enough in itself to be categorized as bizarre. The frosting on the cake, as some are wont to say, is the other participants in this heavenly comedy (or tragedy, depending on how it is viewed). Joseph Smith was not about to pass up the opportunity to divulge the “true” identity and origin of Jesus (Mormon version), Satan, preexistent spirit children, Lamanites, miscellaneous intelligences and the noble and great ones.

Christians, acquainted as they are with the plan of salvation might be surprised when the missionaries present what they call the “plan of salvation.” The orthodox evangelical view of the plan of salvation is:

1. God loves us. 2. All of us have sinned. 3. Sin separates us from God. 4. We are unable to save ourselves. 5. Jesus died for our sins. 6. We need to accept Jesus Christ through faith. 7. Through prayer we can trust in Jesus Christ.

The Mormon version of the plan of salvation is quite different. The missionaries might hand out a sheet with diagrams on the path to heaven, complete with little stick men climbing the ladder to the three levels of exaltation. While the Mormons don’t believe in a literal hell, they do believe in three levels of “glory.” Prior to reaching the point of glory, the earth bound Kolobites exist on earth until death. When death occurs, the mortal body is forever consigned to the grave and the spirit passes on to “spirit prison.” It is at this point that things get interesting.

PRE-EXISTENCE AND OUR FIRST ESTATE

Many folks have correctly noted that numerous Mormons have large families. It is believed by the faithful Mormon that everyone has existed before. Using that rationale, the job of the resolute Mormon family is to get everyone down from Kolob, to the earth and prepare them for their own exaltation.

The first and lowest level of glory is the “Telestial Glory.” This is a form of “entry level” heaven. This is where will be found the Hitlers, the Stalins and the other evil folk that have rejected the Mormon doctrine. As “proof” texts, the Mormons use 1 Cor. 15:39-42, 2 Cor. 12:2 and John 14:2.

“At first we were all spirit children, living in the presence of God, our heavenly father.” Abraham 3:22-23 (Pearl of Great Price)

Apostle James Talmage’s detailed explanation of the Primeval council of the Gods. (*Jesus The Christ*, pp. 15-16.)

A Council called of all the leading spirits. (Abraham 3:23-28)

“That plan was for us to come to earth, gain physical bodies, learn good from evil and have the free agency to choose which we wanted to follow.” (Abraham 3:24-26; D&C 29:39.)

Lucifer, our elder brother who desired the glory for himself, stood up and proposed his own plan. (Moses 4:1-4; Abraham 3:27-28.)

Lucifer’s plan was to take away our free agency, force us to obey all the law. He wanted us to worship him. (Moses 4:1-3.)

⁶⁷⁶ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, pp. 308 & 474.

⁶⁷⁷ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg.250.

Jesus stood and offered himself as our sin-offering, giving man his free agency to attain eternal glory, or godhood with heavenly father. (Moses 4:2.)

The Council voted with Jesus and against Lucifer. (Abraham 3:28.)

Lucifer, very angry, persuaded one-third of the spirit children to follow him and rebel against God and the plan of Jesus. They were cast from God's presence and sent to this earth without bodies of flesh and bone. (Abraham 3:28, D&C 29:36-37.)

The war in heaven: Lucifer sent here to earth where he continues to battle against the saints. (MD, p.828, D&C 29:36-41)

Those who were least valiant in the preexistence are known in mortality as negroes. They came to earth through the lineage of Cain, with black skin. (MD, pp. 526-528, Moses 5:16-41, 7:8-22.)

CREATION OF THE EARTH AND OUR SECOND ESTATE

Imagine, if you will, countless millions of folks sitting in spirit prison, waiting for the chance to transfer to one of the higher level. Now it becomes apparent why the Mormons perform the proxy baptisms for the dead. Those in spirit prison that accept the proxy ceremony performed on their behalf (and by so doing, become Mormons in the afterlife) automatically qualify for at least the second level, or "terrestrial glory."

As "proof" text for proxy baptisms the Mormons put all their eggs in one basket by the Bible verse found in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

As in an series of scripture passages, each must not only be taken in context but the reader must consider to whom the writer was addressing. Paul continued to have problems with the Corinthian church as they had come out of paganism and were still trying to incorporate many of its beliefs into the Christian church. Nevertheless, the "they" spoken of by Paul represented those pagans, turned Christian, who had the hope of the resurrection in their vicarious rites for their dead. At no point was this practice taught by anyone in the church and nothing in the Bible even remotely suggests that we can perform any act of eternal significance for ANYONE else.

Reaching the Terrestrial plateau, one might think that the faithful adherent is almost there. The Mormon "Plan of Salvation" shows the level of Terrestrial Glory as being the middle circle with a crescent moon within. This is the level reserved for those "who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it." (D&C 76:73-74)

It might be instructive to note the terrestrial listing in the Random House dictionary. Terrestrial. Pertaining to, consisting of, or representing the earth as distinct from other planets. 2. Of or pertaining to land as distinct from water. 4. Of or pertaining to the earth or this world; worldly; mundane.

The earth was created, in the same fashion of many worlds, populated by people, in his image. Man would always be learning and growing. (D&C 77:12, Moses 1:39, Abraham 3:19.)

God tells Abraham about the control center, Kolob. (Abraham 2:28)

The LDS version of the Garden of Eden. (Moses 6:51-68; 3:17, 4:12-13.)

The earth is controlled by laws. If we break one, we must be punished. (2 Nephi 9:25-26, Alma 42:17-21.)

Adam and Eve are cast out of the Garden. (Moses 4:29-31.)

They learn that their transgression was necessary that man might live. Adam is baptized, received the Holy Ghost and the priesthood. He becomes the first patriarch. (Moses 5:6-9.)

[Jesus] is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each word to be understood literally. Christ was begotten by an immortal father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers. (MD, p.546-547..)

God is an immortal personage ... Christ is his literal son ... there is nothing figurative about his paternity ... He was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events. (MD, p.742.)

The Lord is now sending the Choicest Spirits to earth. "I see an improvement each few years in the young people of the church. I believe that you are the cream of all the spirits in the hosts of heaven and God has sent you here to do a great work."⁶⁷⁸

GODHOOD, THE THIRD ESTATE

The highest level of glory is reserved for those gods and goddesses that have been faithful and obedient to the Mormon god during their sojourn on earth. This necessarily includes being judged "worthy" by the local bishop and stake president that they might be recipients of a "temple recommend." That is just the beginning. Celestial gods and goddesses must have been married for "time and eternity" in a Mormon temple. They must have performed all the necessary proxy rites for their dear departed.

That exaltation which the saints of all ages have so devoutly sought is Godhood itself⁶⁷⁹.

"You have got to learn how to be gods yourselves ... the same as all gods have done before you."⁶⁸⁰

"My Father worked out his Kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that He may obtain Kingdom upon Kingdom, and it will exalt Him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take His place, and thereby become exalted myself."⁶⁸¹

If God became God by obedience to all of the gospel law with the crowning point being the celestial law of marriage, then that's the only way I can become a god. [answer] Right!⁶⁸²

(12-15) The endowment is the celestial course of instruction ... being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the priesthood and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell⁶⁸³.

Baptism for the dead/keys to the holy priesthood ordained so you may receive honor and glory. For their salvation [the dead] is necessary and essential to our salvation. (D&C 124:28-36; 127:128; 128:15.)

Three degrees of glory-Celestial the highest. (D&C 131)

This is my [God's] work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39.)

vs. 51-53 list some of the requirements, vs. 54-60, 70 list the rewards. They [temple Mormons] will be kings and Priests and Gods. (D&C 76:51-60,70.)

Then shall they be Gods, they shall have all power, the angels are subject to them. (D&C 132:19-20.)

(1-12) The Lord commands marriage.

(1-13) Exaltation is based on celestial marriage.

(1-14) Then shall they be Gods, because they have no end.

(1-15) Only resurrected and glorified Beings may become Parents of Spirit Offspring.

(1-17) Celestial marriage prepares men to be Kings and Priests unto God.

⁶⁷⁸ Mark E. Peterson, BYU address; as found in ACMM, p.235.

⁶⁷⁹ Mormon Doctrine, p.321.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (quoting Joseph Smith), p.321.

⁶⁸¹ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p.306.

⁶⁸² ACMM, p.3.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.203.

(1-18) Celestial marriage makes women Queens and Priestesses to their husbands.

(1-19) Celestial marriage makes it possible for us to claim our mortal children in eternity as well as to propagate ourselves throughout eternity⁶⁸⁴.

New and Everlasting Covenant (plural marriage]: Abide or be damned, etc. Law of the Priesthood, also the name of the temple covenant sworn by all the temple endowment sisters. (D&C 132:1-7, 27-35, 49, 61-64.)

Celestial marriage is the new and everlasting covenant of marriage⁶⁸⁵.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GOD?

The bewilderment of strange planets, mystical beings and unconventional doctrines becomes even more involved. In Mormonism there has been provided the opportunity for deep personal involvement in the process of godhood. Unable to stand on strict biblical scripture, few other religions of the world could ever begin to promise that the creation would stand on the same level as the creator. For those unenlightened by biblical scripture this might seem to be an attractive prospect. However, the Bible is quite clear when it divulges exactly WHO promises godhood.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4-5)

God Proposed a plan for our progression. (Abraham 4:25-26.)

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true. They are they who are the church of the Firstborn. They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things. They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory; And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God.” (D&C 76:53-58).

“Then shall they become gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they become gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them” D&C 132:20).

“Here then is eternal life to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation until you arrive at the station of God” (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 6, P. 306).

The only harmony that we have here is Joseph Smith’s agreement with Satan that godhood is in store for the faithful Mormon. However, Joseph took it one step farther when he said “shall become gods.” Even Satan was not quite as bold when he said “ye shall be AS gods.”

IF I’M A GOD THEN EVEN ADAM MUST BE GOD!

The web of Mormon doctrine become more and more tangled. That pickup truck load of fishing line is spilling over the sides. The more we try and untangle it, the more the situation becomes hopelessly snarled. Brigham didn’t help the situation when he formulated the “Adam/God” doctrine. Mark Twain was credited as saying: “It is better to keep silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.” It isn’t known whether he had Brigham Young in mind when he made that famous quote. Brigham had a high regard for his own articulation and endorsements.

“I say now, when they (his discourses) are copied and approved by me they are as good as scriptures as is couched in this Bible.”⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

⁶⁸⁵ *Mormon Doctrine*, p.529-530.

⁶⁸⁶ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Oct. 16, 1870, Vol. 13, p. 264.

It is a clearly established and documented FACT that the Mormon Prophet, Brigham Young believed and taught for over 20 years that:

1. Adam was/is God the Father. 2. Adam was/is LITERALLY the Father of Jesus Christ. 3. Adam was/is the father of all the spirits of all mankind. 4. Adam (as God), the Father was/is a polygamist⁶⁸⁷.

APOSTLE ADMITS BRIGHAM TAUGHT ADAM WAS GOD, BUT

A letter written in 1981 by Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie confessed that “Yes, Brigham Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him.” (p. 6 of the letter) It makes one wonder how a “Prophet of God” could be so wrong for so long yet: “He (Brigham Young) was called of God. He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his teachings in general. He was a mighty prophet. He lead Israel the way the Lord wanted his people led. He built on the foundation laid by the Prophet Joseph. He completed his work and has gone on the eternal exaltation.” (pp. 5-6 of the letter.) And not only that. It is a prime example of blatant dishonesty of the Mormon Church’s Leaders. On page 6 of his Letter, “Apostle” McConkie states the obvious: “I think that you can give me credit for having knowledge of the quotations from Brigham Young relative to Adam, and knowing what Brigham Young taught under the subject that has become known as the Adam God Theory.” Of course Apostle McConkie was aware of Brigham’s teachings. So also was his father-in-law, Joseph Fielding Smith, who was the tenth president of the Mormon Church and the son of the sixth president of the Mormons. Not only that, but “Apostle” Joseph Fielding Smith was “The Church Historian” for the Mormon Church for 49 years. He certainly knew what Young taught. But, in typical Mormon leadership form, he denied that Brigham Young ever taught the “Adam God” doctrine. Read his eleven-page “explanation” of Young’s teachings on the subject and his complaint that “...if the enemies of the Church who quote this wished to be dishonest....⁶⁸⁸” The point here is that Smith, on page 103, states: “Surely we must give credit for at least ordinary intelligence, and in stating this I place it mildly... and I am bold to say that President Brigham Young was not inconsistent in his teaching of this doctrine.” He apparently felt safe to state that. In 1954 when *Doctrines of Salvation* was published, most of the sources of Brigham Young’s teachings were then suppressed and in the Mormon Church’s possession. Now that some of the more honest Mormon researchers have discovered the truth it is most ironic that it is Smith’s son-in-law, Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie, who has to admit that “what I am saying is, that Brigham Young contradicted Brigham Young and the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young will he believe... as for me and my house, we will have the good sense to choose between the divergent teachings of the same man and come up with that accord with what God has set forth in his eternal plan of salvation.” (pp. 6-7 of the Letter.)

The ten page letter was sent by Apostle McConkie to Brigham Young University Professor Eugene England beginning with “this may well be the most important letter you have or will receive.” Apparently England had been explaining some of Brigham’s teachings to various groups of Mormons including Brigham Young’s teachings that God is progressing, as well as the Adam-God doctrine. That McConkie did not like England relating these teachings of Prophet Young is crystal clear. Said McConkie: “Or if it is true. as I am advised, that if you speak on this subject of the progression of God at firesides and elsewhere, you should cease to do so.” (p. 8 of the Letter.) Not too surprising, McConkie echoes the familiar “message” of the Mormon Church leadership when he tells Professor England that “...if they (the Mormon Leaders) err then be silent on the point and leave the event in the hands of the Lord.” (p. 9 of the Letter.) “After all”, McConkie tells England, “if I err, that is my problem; but in your case (by continuing to teach these particular doctrines of Brigham Young) you will lose your soul.” (p. 9 of the Letter).

Why Professor England would be teaching some of Brigham’s principles and how would he know what they were, only the professor can answer that question. However, his research for his 256-page book, “Brother Brigham”, published in 1980, probably gave him some insight into Brigham Young’s doctrine.

This is another of an endless list of examples of the Mormon Leaders mentality and their “we are right, you are wrong” syndrome. Only this one is even more humorous. Here we have a Mormon “Apostle” saying that a “Prophet of God” taught a significant falsehood about God. And it was OK for the prophet to do so. But, and this is an important ‘but,’ if YOU teach what the “prophet” taught, you will lose your soul, while the “prophet” has gone on to his “exaltation.”

Read his exact words, slowly and very carefully. And follow McConkie’s “logic.”

⁶⁸⁷ see The Adam-God Doctrine, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1982, pp. 14-58.

⁶⁸⁸ Joseph F. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 96.

“If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our soul. This is why Nephi said: ‘And all those who preach false doctrines ... wo, wo, wo, be unto them saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!’ (II Nephi 28:15.) This clearly means that people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and the kind of being God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat, Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and the kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation, but Brigham Young also taught the truth in these fields on other occasions. And I repeat, that in his instance, he was a great prophet and has gone to eternal reward. What he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us.” (p. 7 of the Letter.)⁶⁸⁹

THE LAW OF ETERNAL PROGRESSION

The basic doctrinal error of Mormonism can be summed up in the religion’s key theological position regarding God and Man. It is called “The Law of Eternal Progression” and is the centerpiece of the Mormon faith. It teaches that, “As Man is, God once was and as God is, Man may become.”⁶⁹⁰

In this doctrine, the initiate is taught that the Mormon god, Elohim, was born on another planet, exactly as we are born, through a physical act between a man and a woman. Elohim grew up to maturity on that planet, being obedient to the ‘Laws and Ordinances’ of the god over that planet; who was also once a man. with his own god above him, etc.⁶⁹¹

“God himself was once as we now, and is an exalted man-I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form-like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man-He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth.”⁶⁹²

Elohim died, was resurrected and judged by his god. He was found to be worthy, was raised to godhood and given many righteous women as wives. He was sent with his wives to his Celestial residence near the star Kolob, somewhere in our galaxy, where he began to procreate and beget ‘spirit children,’ without physical bodies. As his children grew in age and numbers, a patriarchal society developed and exists there today.⁶⁹³

The doctrine teaches that all the members of the human race were sent here from that place to gain physical bodies, exactly like the Mormon god did, and to go through the time of testing and learning as Elohim did.

As the story unfolds, when it was time for Elohim to prepare the earth for occupancy, the Head of the gods called a Council of the gods and there the gods concocted the plan for earth. Elohim asked his two eldest sons; brothers (probably from Elohim’s #1 wife), to prepare plans for the Council to review. These brothers were Jesus and Lucifer!

Strange as it might seem, this council, apart from reference to it in the book of Abraham (3:22-25) and Doctrine and Covenants (sect. 121:32) is alluded to by the Mormons in the Bible. Here, they use Revelation 12:7-9 as a reference to “What happened after the council?” (Scriptural References for the Plan of Salvation). Most orthodox Christian scholars attribute that reference to the times of the end rather than an earlier period.

Upon review of the plans, the Council chose the plan of Jesus and he was raised to the position of god. Apparently, the vote was a close one, for Lucifer became angry over the decision. He led one-third of the children of Elohim into an open rebellion over the decision. They battled against one-third of the children who were in agreement with the Council decision. The other third of Elohim’s children were obedient to the Council, but didn’t want to get involved in the battle. They were not valiant in defending the decision⁶⁹⁴.

It is hard to imagine how we fought without physical bodies, or why Elohim was unable to control his own children, but at the end of the fighting, those who fought for Jesus won. Lucifer and one third of our brothers and sisters were cast out from Kolob, and arrived here on earth as Satan and the demons.

⁶⁸⁹ A reproduction of the entire ten page letter is included in the 40 page booklet, *LDS Apostle Confesses Brigham Young Taught Adam-God Doctrine*, available from the Utah Lighthouse Ministry, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110.

⁶⁹⁰ LDS Magazine, *Ensign*, May 1977, page 49.

⁶⁹¹ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6; pages 3-5.

⁶⁹² Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 305.

⁶⁹³ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6; pages 3-5.

⁶⁹⁴ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pages 163-164.

Those who fought valiantly with Jesus would come to earth as the white and delightful people. The more valiant they were, the blonder their hair, the whiter their skin. The less valiant they were, the darker the complexion and hair. That third who did not want to get involved became the black race, born under the curse of Cain. There were no neutrals in Kolob!⁶⁹⁵

Unpopular or controversial edicts by the Mormon god are usually remedied. The cursed black race also received a second chance. On June 9, 1978, Elohim forgave them for their fainthearted past. From that day onward they could become members of the Mormon Melchizedek priesthood, qualifying them to not only become Mormon gods but to become white. Why the Mormon god considers the white skin to be superior is known only to him. The God of the Bible who has made each and every one of us has different beliefs. As Peter said: “..... Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons...” (Acts 10:34)

TESTAMENT OF ANOTHER JESUS CHRIST

The cover of the latest editions of the *Book of Mormon* bear the inscription: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Based on the individual described therein and the teachings of Mormon doctrine, we must seriously conclude that we are talking about a much different Jesus Christ. We are faced with radically different teachings when confronted with the person of Christ. His “creation,” “marriage,” death, resurrection and ministry are treated quite differently from what is given in God’s word, the Bible.

MORMON JESUS AND SATAN ARE BROTHERS

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

As opposed to biblical teaching that Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, the Mormon belief is totally opposite. The New Testament repeats on six occasions the fact that Jesus is the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of the Father. The belief that Christ is the second person of the Godhead is completely foreign to Mormon thought. Even among Christians, the Trinitarian concept is difficult to grasp. While the early Mormons held to this belief, to some degree, it didn’t take long for them to drift away into disavowal. The Bible reveals that Christ was not only God but that he was the Creator.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

Compare the Bible with official Mormon doctrine.

“His Jesus’ trials were continuous. Perhaps his brother, Lucifer, had heard him say when he was still but a lad of 12, ‘Whist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?’ (Luke 2:49) “...Then came the time when Satan thought to trip him. Their encounter in the previous world had been on more equal terms, but now Jesus was young and Satan was experienced.”⁶⁹⁶

“The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer. This spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind.”⁶⁹⁷

“Christ Worked Out His Own Salvation” “...as far as this life is concerned it appears that he had to start just as all other children do and gain his knowledge line upon line. Without doubt, Jesus came into the world subject to the same condition as was required of each of us he forgot everything and he had to grow from grace to grace.”⁶⁹⁸

Bruce R. McConkie (late Mormon apostle) taught:

“The Lord Jesus worked out his own salvation while in this mortal probation.”⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁵ *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1; pages 64-66.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ensign*, December, 1980, pp. 3-5. Jesus of Nazareth, Spencer W. Kimball, First Presidency Message.

⁶⁹⁷ Milton R. Hunter, First Council of Seventy, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 15.

⁶⁹⁸ *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, pp. 32-33.)

⁶⁹⁹ Our Relationship with the Lord, BYU devotional address, 3/2/82, Bruce R. McConkie, p.9.

“Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers—Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father.”⁷⁰⁰

When the necessity of Jesus’ birth arrived, Elohim came to earth physically, and had sexual relations with Mary (one of his daughters from Kolob) to beget Jesus. Remember, Elohim is an exalted man, totally physical in nature.⁷⁰¹

THE MARRIAGE OF ANOTHER JESUS

The Mormon Jesus was married to at least three identified women. The sisters of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene. He converted water into wine at one of his own weddings at Cana. One Mormon apostle taught that the reason Jesus was so persecuted was because he had so many wives and concubines. Other teachers taught that Jesus was a father of many children. Joseph Smith claimed to be a direct descendant of Jesus⁷⁰².

“Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana of Galilee—We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into relation whereby he could see his seed.”⁷⁰³

“Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana in Galilee ... We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into relationship whereby he could see his seed.”⁷⁰⁴

“There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and on a careful reading of that transaction, it will be discovered that no less a person than Jesus Christ was married on that occasion. If he was never married, his intimacy with Mary and Martha and the other Mary also whom Jesus loved must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the best of it.”⁷⁰⁵

In the LDS Councils,; “Joseph F. Smith... spoke upon, the marriage in Cana of Galilee. He thought Jesus was the bridegroom and Mary and Martha the brides.”⁷⁰⁶

“The grand reason of the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, causing his crucifixion, was evidently based upon polygamy, according to the testimony of the philosophers who rose in that age. A belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives causes the persecution of Jesus and his followers. We might almost think they were Mormons.”⁷⁰⁷

“One thing is certain, that there were several holy women that greatly loved Jesus, such as Mary and Martha her sister, and Mary Magdalene; and Jesus greatly loved them and associated with them much; and when he arose from the dead, instead of first showing himself to his chosen witnesses, the Apostles, he appeared first to these women, or at least to one of them, namely, Mary Magdalene. Now it would be very natural for a husband in the resurrection to appear first to his own dear wives ... If all the acts of Jesus were written, no doubt we should learn that these beloved women were his wives.”⁷⁰⁸

“I discover that some of the eastern papers represent me as a great blasphemer, because I said in my lecture on marriage ... that Jesus was married at Cana of Galilee, that Mary, Martha and others were his wives, and that he begat children.

“All I have to say in reply to that charge is this: they worship a Saviour too pure and holy to fulfill the commands of his Father. I worship one that IS JUST PURE ENOUGH ‘to fulfill all righteousness;’ not only the righteous law of baptism, but the still more righteous law ‘to multiply and replenish the earth.’ Startle not at this, for even the Father himself honored that law by coming down to Mary, without a natural body, AND BEGETTING A SON; and if Jesus begat children, he only ‘did that which he had seen his father do.’”⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁰ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 547, 742.

⁷⁰¹ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 115; *Mormon Doctrine*, pages 742-743.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1; pages 345-346.

⁷⁰³ Orson Hyde (Apostle), *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 282.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁵ Hyde, *ibid.*, 4:259.

⁷⁰⁶ *Journal of* [LDS apostle] *Wilford Woodruff*, 22 July 1883.

⁷⁰⁷ Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal Of Discourses*, 1:346.

⁷⁰⁸ Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 159.

⁷⁰⁹ Hyde, *Journal Of Discourses*, 2:210.

Odgen Kraut, Mormon polygamist writer quoted Luke 23:27-29:

“But Jesus, turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and FOR YOUR CHILDREN.” Kraut then adds, “These women were wives and mothers who ‘bewailed and lamented’ because Jesus was going to the cross ... Jesus knew the sorrows that would continue for these women and children because his persecutors would not stop at the death of Jesus. They would continue to destroy his children ... and his disciples.”⁷¹⁰

Finally, in a March 17, 1963 letter to LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith, a Mr. J.R. Smith asked:

“In a discussion recently, the question arose, ‘Was Christ married? The quote of Isaiah 53:10 was given which reads, ‘Yet it hath pleased the Lord to bruise Him; he hath put Him to grief; ... He shall see His seed, he shall prolong His days...’ ‘What is meant by ‘He shall see His seed’? Does this mean Christ had children? In the Temple ceremony we are told that only through Temple marriage can we receive the highest degree of exaltation ... Christ came to set the example and therefore we believe that he must have been married. Are we right?”

Smith answered in his own hand, marking the word “seed” and, noting, “Mosiah 15:10-12. Please read your *Book of Mormon!*” He marked the word “married” in the last paragraph and noted, “YES! But do not preach it. The Lord advised us not to cast pearls before swine.”

ATONEMENT BY ANOTHER JESUS

The Mormon Jesus died on a cross to atone for Adam’s transgression which was an actual blessing that allowed us to gain physical bodies and mortality. Without this transgression we could not gain the physical attributes we needed in our own journey to godhood.

Adam’s act brought mortality and physical death into the world. Jesus’ death on Calvary only brought physical resurrection and immortality into existence. His atonement assured all mankind of only physical resurrection; we will each be judged according to our works, and punished for our own sins⁷¹¹.

The Mormon doctrine teaches that the Christian emphasis on the Cross is pagan and of the devil. There is no cross displayed in any Mormon building anywhere. Its use, even in the home or as a piece of jewelry is forbidden! The Cross as the place where Jesus became our sin offering is vehemently labeled as heresy. In an earlier chapter, we discussed the Mormon symbol that was used as a replacement for the cross. In an understanding of the occult nature of the nail (spike or spire), the Christian should understand how diametrically opposed it is the symbol of Calvary.

Likewise, the doctrine of His shed blood is rejected. The Mormons use only bread and water in their Sacrament. The true doctrine, according to Mormonism, is that Jesus sweat blood for our sins in Gethsemane, on the condition that we are obedient to all the laws and ordinances of the Mormon gospel⁷¹².

If a Mormon is thus committed proceeds through the Temple Ceremony, obedient to the end, and if the judgement on personal works of obedience are sufficient to cover the personal sin in individual lives, they can be judged worthy to enter into the Celestial Kingdom, the highest degree of glory, and become Gods and Goddesses!⁷¹³ Each man will be given many wives to take to his new kingdom, and will be sent out to some new place even as Elohim was sent out before him! There the process will begin anew. There is one final qualification. In order to pass on to Celestial glory, all must “pass by brother Joseph” and receive his final approval!⁷¹⁴

While the Mormon Church teaches that the faithful and obedient will go forth in the family unit, with all the worthy family members, the actual doctrine is that only the wife will accompany the husband, and she will be only as the first wife of many. Each worthy son will go forth as a god over his own kingdom. Each worthy daughter will be given as a wife to some worthy god elsewhere.

POLYGAMY THE MORMON DILEMMA

⁷¹⁰ Ogden Kraut, *Was Jesus Married?*, 1969, p.84.

⁷¹¹ James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, pages 68-70.

⁷¹² LDS pamphlet, *What the Mormons Think of Christ*, page 22.

⁷¹³ *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 2; pages 44-46.

⁷¹⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4; -page 271.

No discussion of Mormon doctrine would be complete without the most embarrassing teaching that Joseph Smith ever concocted. Those seeking a “burning in the bosom” over the truth of Mormon scripture may receive more than the warm, fuzzy feeling they seek. The uncomfortable feeling they receive after trying to compare the various scriptures pertaining to polygamy is something more akin to confusion and heartburn. Trying to reconcile the conflicting scripture is an exercise in futility.

The *Book of Mormon* (Jacob 2:26-27) tells us: “Wherefore, I the Lord will not suffer that this people shall do For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none.” Elsewhere, wives are spoken of in the singular (III Nephi 12:32, 22:1, IV Nephi 1:11.) At what point Joseph had second thoughts about his “translation” and when he required a “revelation” to enlarge his marital boundaries must have come after D&C 42:22 was recorded in 1831. His earliest plural marriage may have come as early as 1833 according to BYU professor Hill (see below).

POLYGAMY-WILL RESUME AT MILLENNIUM

The practice of polygamy surely had to be one of the saddest chapters of the Mormon Prophet’s life. This doctrine caused many good, devoted followers of the prophet to publicly lie to the world. It caused unmeasurable heartache, not only to the prophet’s own first wife, but to the wives of his disciples who also engaged in this embarrassing practice. And it is one of those doctrines and early chapters of Mormonism that the Mormon Leaders are very tight-lipped about (Try writing the Church’s Public Relation’s Department in Salt Lake City and request a list of all of the prophets’ wives, their age at the time of their marriages to the prophet, and the number of children fathered by him.) You will find that they don’t want to talk a whole lot about this “holy practice (which) will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the millennium.”⁷¹⁵

Strange, though it might seem, the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants dealt harshly with polygamy.

“Inasmuch as this ‘Church of Christ’ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy; we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband; except that in the event of death when either is at liberty to marry again.” (D&C 101:4, 1835 edition)

In other words, no man could marry a second wife unless the first one died. No divorce and no polygamy. It was labeled a CRIME! That was the “Word” from God.

It was only when it became so openly known that Smith finally admitted it and declared it a special gift of God and released the now “scripturized” law of polygamy given in the 132nd section of Doctrine and Covenants. Although this “revelation” came forth in 1843, it did not show up in “scripture” until 1876. The earlier warning against polygamy (D&C 101:4, 1835 edition) just disappeared without note or explanation.

It should be noted that Joseph’s new “revelation” giving God’s sanction for what was a crime before Him only a few years earlier, DID NOT retroactively absolve Joseph of all wrong. We read:

“If any man espouse a virgin and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that belongeth unto him and to no one else.” (D&C 132:61)

Some problems pop up when we examine the revelations and the dates at when they were supposedly received. First, Joseph had already been quite active in the “espousing” business long before his wife heard of the doctrine, long before she reluctantly gave consent to be party to it.

Second, seven of the ten wives he already had were already married to other living men in complete opposition to the new “revelation” Joseph received! Joseph received “Marriage for eternity, with connubial privileges” while the husbands had married for “time only.”

Third, notwithstanding the problems already stated, the whole idea of multiple wives was (and still is) in total disagreement with Doctrine and Covenants 42:22 which says, “Thou shalt love thy WIFE with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto HER and NONE else.” (emphasis added)

⁷¹⁵ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 578.

WHERE ARE RECORDS?

With all the records that the Mormon Church keeps, they don't know (or won't tell) when and where and to whom Joseph married as plural wives. However, we can get a glimpse of the prophet's activities from various sources including a Master's Thesis submitted December 1975 to the Faculty of Purdue University by Daniel W. Bachman titled "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith." We know from Joseph's "official" history of the church by "himself" that he married Emma Hale on January 18, 1827⁷¹⁶. Don't you find it curious that not one of the other five volumes "by himself" mentions anything concerning the names or dates of ANY other of his marriages? But that is not because he didn't marry many other women. It is because it was too embarrassing for the Church, during Joseph's time, to admit the practice. (it wasn't "officially" proclaimed until 1852, around five years AFTER the Mormons went to Utah.)

DID JOSEPH PRACTICE?

That Joseph married many other women can be established by the Mormon Church's own literature. During a time when the Reorganized LDS Church claimed that Joseph never taught or practiced polygamy, the Mormon Church published a 112 page book entitled *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* to counter the claim. That work, published in 1905, is filled with sworn affidavits of women who claim they were among Joseph's plural wives, including the testimony of Sarah Ann Kimball, who at age 17, married Joseph on July 27, 1842.⁷¹⁷ What were the names of some of the prophet's wives? Two readily available sources include the 146-page book *Joseph Smith and Polygamy*⁷¹⁸ and *No Man Knows My History*⁷¹⁹, BYU professor Marvin S. Hill helped his sister, Donna Hill (see her acknowledgments) in her biography, *Joseph Smith-The First Mormon*. This is a "favorable" treatment by a Mormon. Her list of Joseph's wives can be found on pages 350-59 of the same volume.

In 1887, Andrew Jenson, Mormon Church Historian, listed 27 women who were married to Joseph Smith, officially, during the time such a union was a "crime" before God. Brodie lists each in detail and brings the number to a total of 48 women who were sealed to the Prophet and united with him in "Holy Polygamy." These marriages are not to be confused with later "proxy" sealings to the dead Joseph Smith. 149 additional dead women were later sealed to him in temple ceremonies, according to Brodie.

A PROPHET'S PROPOSAL

Writer Hill explains that "Six or more of Joseph's wives had lived under his roof for extended periods, some as youthful protégés or family helpers.... As Emily told it, the prophet approached her when she was eighteen and asked if she would burn his letter if he wrote her (she told him she would).... A few days after her nineteenth birthday, she was told confidentially that the prophet wanted her to meet him that night at Heber C. Kimball's to become his wife.... Heber's wife was not at home and he sent his children, Helen and William, off to the neighbors. In Heber's presence, Joseph told Emily that the Lord had given her to him in plural marriage, and although he realized she was frightened, he knew she would have him.... She and Joseph were married on the spot by Heber,.... Emily confided in her sister Eliza, who felt bad at first, according to Emily. However, the news prepared Eliza for the principle of celestial marriage and a few days later she too was married to Joseph by Heber C. Kimball⁷²⁰." We are indebted to Bachman's master's thesis for a list of twelve of Joseph's wives, whom he married in 1841, '42 and '43.

YOUNG WOMEN?

He is not sure that Joseph married 17 year old Fanny Alger in 1833. Nor does his data show when Joseph married 14 year old Nancy M. Winchester and 19 year old Cordelia C. Morely. October 27, 1841 was the marriage date of 20 year old Zina D. Huntington and 17 year old Sarah Whitney married the prophet on July 27, 1842. The following seven girls were married to the prophet in 1843. Emily Partridge (mentioned above), 17 year old Lucy Walker, 15 year old Helen Kimball (the daughter of Apostle Heber C. Kimball), 17 year old Sarah Lawrence and her 19 year old sister, Maria Lawrence, 16 year old Flora A. Woodworth and 19 year old Melissa Lott. (Bachman, op. cit., p. 118) Like Hill, Bachman observes that four of the above girls "were wards of the Prophet and were residing in his

⁷¹⁶ *Documentary History of the Church* Vol. 1, p. 17.

⁷¹⁷ *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, pg. 88

⁷¹⁸ Published by Utah Lighthouse Ministry in Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁷¹⁹ Fawn Brodie, 32 pages (see Appendix C) available from Utah Lighthouse Ministry.

⁷²⁰ Bachman, *A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural*, op cit., pg. 352-353.

home when their wedding occurred⁷²¹.” He also footnotes on the same page that “The Partridges were fatherless, and the Lawrence sisters were orphans.”

OLDER WOMEN?

And yes, the prophet married some “older” women as well. Bachman shows that Joseph married between 4-13 wives who were ages 21-30 and he married 5-9 wives ages 31-40. He also married 3 or 4 wives who were 51 or older⁷²². Why the uncertainty? Because the Mormon Leaders won’t say. (I wonder why that is?)

ACTUALLY “LIVE” WITH THEM?

Did Joseph actually “live as man and wife” with his plural wives? Mormon historian (and BYU professor) Marvin S. Hill downplays this aspect speculating that Joseph had “conjugal relations “with “less than fifteen⁷²³.” And what did the prophet’s wife think about all this wife business? Did she believe it?, After all, few knew the prophet as well as she. Well, she plain did NOT like it. And a revelation telling her to accept it or be damned didn’t help a bit.

EMMA’S REVELATION

“And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said that they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God. For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey only my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him. AND I COMMAND MINE HANDMAID, EMMA SMITH, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. BUT IF SHE WILL NOT ABIDE this commandment SHE SHALL BE DESTROYED, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and WILL DESTROY HER IF SHE ABIDE NOT IN MY LAW.” (D&C 132:52-54, emphasis added).

In Joseph Smith’s official History of the Church, we find that when his brother, Hyrum, took the written revelation, which is now Doctrine and Covenants, section 132, over to Joseph’s wife, Emma, she was not that receptive: “When he came back Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger. Joseph quietly remarked, ‘I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did.’ Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.”⁷²⁴

EMMA’S RESPONSE

Emma was mad and the prophet knew it in a suppressed diary that came to light through the carelessness of a Mormon researcher (who subsequently filed suit [and lost] to stop its publication). We find that Joseph was afraid Emma would divorce him so he felt he had to tell her that he would relinquish “all for her sake⁷²⁵” But Joseph confided in his secretary: “He however told me that he should not relinquish anything. O God deliver thy servant from iniquity and bondage⁷²⁶.”

JOSEPH’S PROBLEM

Bachman tells us:

“That Smith felt compelled to appease his wife by denying his personal convictions and intentions illustrates the intense emotion that Emma exhibited. Her reaction is understandable, given the circumstances she faced. The spring of 1843 had been a busy one for her husband in adding plural wives to his household. Six of his acquisitions were quite young. It perhaps made matters worse that most of these women were living in the Smith home at the time. Furthermore, the revelation to Smith which was recorded on July 12, 1843, commanded Emma to receive all these women as Smith’s wives asserting that neither they nor her husband were guilty of adultery. Emma was directed to

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, p. 125)

⁷²⁴ *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, Introduction, p. XXXIII.

⁷²⁵ *Clayton’s Secret Writings Uncovered: Extracts From the Diaries of Joseph Smith’s Secretary William Clayton*.

Diary entry August 16, 1843, p. 24.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

‘cleave unto ... Joseph and none else,’ and to forgive him his transgressions against her. Finally, the revelation said that she must cease resistance or suffer dire spiritual and eternal consequences.”⁷²⁷

WHY EMMA DIDN'T FOLLOW

So why do you suppose that Emma did not come to Utah with Brigham Young when the Mormons moved West? “The introduction of plural marriage, which had an adverse effect on Mormonism in Kirtland, (Ohio), tended to fracture the unity of Smith’s own household. Although his addition of plural wives in defiance of the opposition of his first wife was consistent with principles outlined in his revelations, Emma eventually became more and more rebellious. Smith’s secret unions, his propensity to wed young wards, and his enunciation of a revelation rebuking Emma for standing in the way of his polygamy were the most ostensible factors behind her disenchantment. Her opposition to Smith’s doctrine and to its continuance by his successor, Brigham Young, was one of the major reasons why she did not accompany the saints when they migrated west.”⁷²⁸

WHY DID POLYGAMY END?

Simply put, because it became against the law and Congress passed a law that would strip the Mormon Church from all but \$50,000 in assets. For a while the Mormon Leaders taught that polygamy was essential for the highest exaltation. In 1891, the First Presidency and Apostles made the following statement to the President of the United States. The statement was made during the Senate hearings to see if the new senator from Utah, Reed Smoot, should be seated, since some of the Mormons were still practicing polygamy in violation of the law. The statement reads: “We, the First Presidency and apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, beg to respectively represent to Your Excellency the following facts: We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right; that it was a necessity to man’s highest exaltation in the life to come.”⁷²⁹ That key word is “formerly.” When the Federal Marshalls were in Utah hunting down the Mormon Leaders because they were practicing polygamy they vowed never to give it up. The third president of the Church, John Taylor went into hiding in 1885 until his death July 25, 1887. The next president of the Church was not sustained until almost two years later on April 7, 1889. He was Wilford Woodruff, and had been in hiding since the early days of 1879⁷³⁰. He was in a heck of a spot. The previous president, John Taylor, had reportedly received a revelation that the Lord would NEVER rescind polygamy: “My son John: You have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant and how far it is binding upon my people.... how can I revoke an everlasting covenant ... I the Lord do not change and my word and my covenants and my law do not.... I HAVE NOT REVOKED THIS LAW NOR WILL I FOR IT IS EVERLASTING AND THOSE WHO WILL ENTER INTO MY GLORY MUST OBEY THE CONDITIONS THEREOF, EVEN SO AMEN.”⁷³¹

In March of 1887, Congress passed the “Edmunds-Tucker Law.” This disincorporated the Mormon Church and took over the property the church owned except for buildings used exclusively for religious services. Previously, in 1885, Idaho passed a law that disfranchised all members of the Mormon Church preventing them voting or holding public office. Still, the Mormons held out, choosing to follow the “law of God” over the “law of the land,” praying a Supreme Court challenge to the law would invalidate it. The law was upheld by the Supreme Court on February 3, 1890. Under these trying circumstances, then President Wilford Woodruff issued the “Manifesto” in September which was sustained in October declaring an end to plural marriage. Still, following the above “Manifesto,” 70% of the Mormon Apostles took an active part in polygamy⁷³².

POLYGAMY: A PLUS IN HEAVEN

An informed Mormon woman may INSIST that her husband in the “hereafter” have several wives. In one article a woman writer, Linda Wilcox, put it this way: “The Mormon Church’s doctrinal commitment to plural marriage as well as the exigencies of production at least BILLIONS of spirit children suggest the probability SOME BELIEVE NECESSITY or more than one Mother in Heaven”⁷³³. Why would she say this? Consider the following three tenets of Mormonism. FIRST, remember that it is doctrine that “All men and women are in the similitude of the universal

⁷²⁷ Bachman, op. cit., p. 161.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁷²⁹ *Reed Smoot Case*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

⁷³⁰ *Profiles of the Presidents*, p. 117.

⁷³¹ *Unpublished Revelations of The Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, compiled by Fred C. Collier, VIII, pp. 145-46.

⁷³² *Sunstone*, After the Manifesto, Jan./Feb. 1983, p. 28.

⁷³³ *Sunstone*, Sept/Oct, 1980, Vol. 5, No. 5, p. 14.

Father and Mother, and are LITERALLY the sons and daughters of Deity⁷³⁴.” SECOND: the best Mormon and non-Mormon guesses estimate that there have been approximately 70 BILLION people born on the earth⁷³⁵. By anyone’s standard, that’s a lot of children for any one “mother” to have. But this is serious doctrine for the Mormons. The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt actually took the time out to calculate how long it would have taken a woman to have 70 BILLION spirit children. His conclusion? It would have taken “over one hundred thousand millions of years for the same Mother to have given birth to this vast family⁷³⁶.” And THIRD: These spirit children are the result of “union” between husband and wife in heaven. A little background. In Mormon theology there are three kingdoms in heaven, i.e. the Celestial, the Terrestrial and the Telestial⁷³⁷. The “Celestial” is the highest of the three kingdoms. BUT, “in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order (Temple marriage). And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; HE CANNOT HAVE AN INCREASE⁷³⁸.” This is interpreted by Mormons to mean that there will be NO sex in the two lower degrees of the Celestial Kingdom, and certainly NO sex in the other two heavens, i.e. the Terrestrial and the Telestial Kingdoms.

WHO HAS SEX IN HEAVEN?

This “increase” business has caused some Mormons to wonder just how God will keep the male and female residents of the lower kingdoms from participating in “union,” as they put it. They are advised that God has it all worked out. Joseph Fielding Smith, the son of the sixth president of the Mormon Church and himself the tenth president of the Mormons, was considered one of the most knowledgeable theologians in the church. In fact, there are five volumes of Answers To Gospel Questions in which Smith answered the most troubling questions of the faithful. Once, a concerned member asked “...The question was raised in our class in regard to men and women who are assigned to other kingdoms ... what will prevent them from living together outside the marriage covenant? We assume it to be fact that females, as well as males, in great numbers will inherit places in these other kingdoms. Will you kindly discuss this problem for us?”⁷³⁹ Smith begins his three page reply with: “We may well believe that our eternal Father has fully considered this point and made ample provision to meet the situation.” There certainly can be no more doubt about that “problem.” To make his answer perfectly clear, Smith states, “Our own sober judgment teaches us that the Lord in his infinite wisdom and justice, would see to it that the PRIVILEGES of INCREASE or COHABITATION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN in these kingdoms would be impossible because of peculiar conditions pertaining to these glories.”⁷⁴⁰

MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL?

All this adds up to the fact that a woman’s place in Mormon theology can be pretty bleak. At least it is in no way equal to the role, position and grandeur of the man. In Mormon theology women essentially serve as eternal incubators. There may be a better way to say it, but women serve as the capacity of an eternal womb for countless, endless, eternal spirit children. These are the spirit children that she and her God husband will, along with her husband’s other wives, people new and endless worlds.

Here is how it works: In Mormon theology, God is an exalted man. He has lived on some earth somewhere. Embraced the gospel there. Married one or more (Brigham Young taught the more, the better) women for “eternity” there. Died. Been resurrected. Continued to “progress” until he became a God. Incidentally, this “eternal progressing” doesn’t seem to be too, awfully long, since at least three inhabitants of THIS earth who have died have already become Gods. (See the Mormon scripture Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132, verse 37.)

WIVES AND CHILDREN BY THE MILLION

Once God has become God, in Mormon theology, he and his wives can then begin peopling worlds with their spirit children. A Mormon theologian has written: “Those who gain eternal life (exaltation) also gain eternal lives, meaning in the resurrection they have ‘eternal increase,’ a “continuation of the seeds,” a “continuation of the lives.” Their spirit progeny will “continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye

⁷³⁴ Official Pronouncement from the Mormon Church’s First Presidency, *Improvement Era*, November, 1909, p. 80.

⁷³⁵ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring, 1984, p. 84.

⁷³⁶ Pratt, *The Seer*, March 1853, p.38.

⁷³⁷ *Doctrine and Covenants* 76:96-98.

⁷³⁸ *Doctrine and Covenants* 131:1-4.

⁷³⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers To Gospel Questions*, Vol 4:64.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 66

could not number them⁷⁴¹. In any regard, the greatest reward in Mormon theology for a man is to become a God and fill endless worlds with spirit children. How many children? Well, the above quoted Apostle said something about the sand upon the seashore. How many wives? Probably, A LOT! The Mormon Prophet Brigham Young, in remarks made on September 9, 1860 boasted: “Brother Cannon remarked that the people wondered how many wives and children I had. He may inform them, that I shall have wives and children by the MILLION, and glory, and riches and power, and dominion, and kingdom after kingdom, and reign triumphantly⁷⁴².” This idea that there are unlimited wives in the hereafter for faithful Mormon men was not unique to Young. His counselor (and Apostle) Heber C. Kimball believed that he could have thousands of wives. Said he in a sermon given in Feb. 1, 1857:

“Supposing that I have a wife or a dozen of them, and she should say, “You cannot be exalted without me,” and suppose they all should say so, what of that? ... Suppose that I lose the whole of them before I go into the spirit world, but that I have been a good, faithful man all the days of my life, and lived my religion.... and if I am faithful all the time, and continue right along with Brother Brigham, we will go to Brother Joseph and say, ‘Here we are Brother Joseph; we are here ourselves are we not, with none of the property we possessed in our probationary state, not even the rings on our fingers?’ He will say to us, ‘Come along, my boys, we will give you a good suit of clothes. Where are your wives?’ ‘They are back yonder; they would not follow us.’ ‘Never mind,’ says Joseph, ‘Here are thousands, Have all you want.’”⁷⁴³

EARLY LEADERS: OVER 100 WIVES

Perhaps the idea of God having many wives is not too unusual if you believe that God is the personal, literal parent, with an exalted woman, for every spirit of every person who has ever lived or will ever live upon this earth. Did the Mormon Leaders take this idea of many wives in heaven seriously? The Endowment House records reveal that on Nov. 22, 1870, the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt had himself sealed to 101 dead women. And one week later on November 29, 1870 he was sealed to an additional 109 women. (that’s 210 wives, not counting his other living plural wives, sealed to him for eternity.) On the latter date, 91 women were also sealed to his deceased brother, the apostle Parley Pratt, who had died some 13 years prior. The St. George Temple records show that Apostle Wilford Woodruff, who later became the fourth president of the Mormon Church, was sealed to 189 dead women in a period of slightly over two years (Jan. 29, 1879 to March 14, 1881.) and a Moses Franklin Farnsworth was sealed to some 345 dead women in a two year period.

What essentially is the function of these wives in the Mormon heaven? To give birth to spirit children. Hundreds of them. Thousands of them; millions of them; billions of them; throughout all eternity. It probably will be possible for Brigham to have millions of children given enough wives ... and enough time. After all, in Mormon theology, the billions and billions of people who have lived on this earth were the LITERAL spirit children of our god and his wife (wives).

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Since the law of the land ultimately prevented Mormons from practicing polygamy, Mormon men now marry and live with one wife at a time. Thus today, a faithful Mormon man may marry a worthy Mormon woman for “eternity” in a Mormon Temple. But, should that wife die before her husband, the husband may again marry another worthy Mormon woman for “eternity.” That makes two wives for the one husband in the next world. It was such a circumstance that inspired eleventh church president Harold B. Lee to write the following poem: “My lovely Joan was sent to me; So Joan joins Fern, That three might be, more fitted for eternity. O Heavenly Father, my thanks to thee⁷⁴⁴.” Thus, a Mormon man may be “sealed” to many, many women as his wives in the hereafter. What about Mormon women? Well they can be sealed to one Mormon man. And live with one Mormon man in heaven. Period.

WHY WOULD WOMEN INSIST ON POLYGAMY?

But of course, if a Mormon man who becomes exalted and becomes a God and is going to be the literal father of the spirits of “billions and billions and billions” (remember that sand on the seashore?) of people, his wife may very well wish him to be married to a lot of other women. It is not surprising that if God is an exalted man who is married to his exalted wife (wives) that someone will begin to wonder just why we do not pray to our “Heavenly Mother”

⁷⁴¹ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., p. 238.

⁷⁴² *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, p. 178.

⁷⁴³ *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, p. 209.

⁷⁴⁴ *Deseret News*, 1974 Church Almanac, p. 17.

along with our prayers to our Heavenly Father?⁷⁴⁵ The referred article includes a reference to a vision where Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw BOTH God the Father and God(?) the Mother in Heaven, in vision.

“...in the heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each of whom has his own wife or wives, which were given to him previous to his redemption while yet in his mortal state⁷⁴⁶.” “This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in all plainness by the First Presidency of the Church⁷⁴⁷.”

999 LIMIT?

In all fairness to Brigham Young, we must admit that there is a suggestion that Mormon men may not have more than 999 wives in heaven. What is the clue? This startling entry was found in the Apostle Abraham Cannon's diary:

THURSDAY, APRIL 5th, 1894 “...I met with the Quorum and the Presidency in the temple ... President Woodruff then spoke ... In searching out my genealogy I found about four hundred of my femal[e] kindred who were never married. I asked Pres. Young what I should do with them. He said for me to have them sealed to me unless there were more than [than?] 999 of them. The doctrine startled me, but I had it done...⁷⁴⁸”

Thus, are Mormon men and women equal? About as equal as the King of Siam and any one of his wives.

ALL OTHER CHURCHES FALSE

One mark of a cult is that it alone holds the exclusive spiritual truth. Mormonism certainly doesn't claim to be one of many. It not only holds the claim of being the only true church but holds all other religions and denominations in utter contempt. Their teachings make this quite clear.

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight, and those professors were all corrupt⁷⁴⁹.”

“This Church is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.” (D&C 1:30.)

“There is no salvation outside the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint.”⁷⁵⁰

“All other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God; and any person who receives Baptism or the Lord's Supper from their hands will highly offend God; for He looks upon them as the most corrupt of all people. Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the whore of Babylon⁷⁵¹.”

The CHURCH is the spiritual body of Christian believers with Jesus at its head. The true church is not an organization, a building or a denomination! It might gather together and be called Baptist, Mennonite, Lutheran or any one of hundreds of names. Indeed, the original LDS church has spawned about 130 splinter groups, all claiming to be the true church. The New Testament is replete with references to the “church.” In every case, it is defined as a body of believers.

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:21)

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

The many times that Jesus was confronted with false doctrine, He spoke the True Word of God. In every area of false doctrine with Mormonism, the True Word of God can be given as the antidote. Lets compare the Mormon doctrine of “The Law of Eternal Progression” with the Word of God.

⁷⁴⁵ That very possibility is raised in the Sept/Oct, 1980 issue of *Sunstone Magazine*, (Vol. 5, No. 5 pp. 9-15) titled, *The Mormon Concept of A Mother in Heaven*.

⁷⁴⁶ Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 37.

⁷⁴⁷ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516.

⁷⁴⁸ Daily Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, April 5, 1894, Vol. 18, pp. 66-67.

⁷⁴⁹ *Pearl of Great Price*, *Joseph Smith History*, 2:1 9

⁷⁵⁰ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 670.

⁷⁵¹ Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 255.

Lets evaluate the doctrine that God/Elohim as a part of a multi-generation family of gods.

The Biblical God of Christianity says, “before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me.” (Isaiah 43:10). “I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God!” (Isaiah 44:6). “Ye are my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any!” (Isaiah 44:8).

Our God says that He had no father or mother, or Gods above Him. He has no brothers or sisters who are gods, and there will never be any god after him. It is pretty clear that God knew what He was talking about! When He blessed Abraham, He swore by Himself, because He knew none greater (Hebrews 6:13). The Scripture says that it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). I believe God!

Our God denies that He grew up on another planet. He denies that He became a god through the judgement of some other God: He inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15). He does not change (Malachi 3:6), in Him there is no variableness or shadow of turning (James 1:17). He always was God since before time even existed (John 1:2).

The Mormon doctrine has turned away that people from the living God into a fable of vain imagination. Their foolish hearts have been darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools! Why? Because they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man! They have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever! (Romans 1:21-25).

Digging through the fable of goddesses for wives and a society of ‘spirit children,’ lets pause at another giant heresy, the doctrine that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers!

We are told, in scripture, that the great Son of the Morning, Lucifer, was cut to the ground, brought down to hell, because he sought to exalt his throne above the stars of God (Isaiah 12-14). He was an anointed Cherub or Angel of God, but was a created being (Ezekiel 28:14-15). Yet it was Jesus who created the very angel the Mormons claim was His physical brother (Hebrews 2: 1). Finally, Christ’s position, and that of any angel is made clear. Jesus was always God; so much better than the angels. Unto what angel has God ever declared, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee.” (Hebrews 1:4-5)? None!

The next heresy deals with Jesus becoming our Savior through a vote of a Council of Gods, because he had a better plan. The Scripture again declares that Jesus always was God and was with God from before time existed (John 1:1-5). In the Greek, John 1:18 declares that He is the “only begotten Theos” or, the only begotten ‘God without beginning.’ His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2). He told the world that “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Our Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last (Revelation 22:13). To reduce Him to anything less, is to deny His very divinity; the very reason only He could be the sin-offering to end all sin offerings (Hebrews 9:12-14)!

Gliding past the racism of the Mormon ‘plan’, lets look at the next “hard heresy”. Since the Mormon god is a physical man, preoccupied at Kolob with the work of “procreation”, it must also be that he had physical relations with Mary, to purposely “beget” Jesus. The Prophet Brigham Young said that the Holy Ghost could not be involved, otherwise it would not be safe to lay hands on the young women of the church for the receiving of the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost would make them pregnant and bring great shame to the Elders of the Church. (Ibid., Vol. 1; page 51.)

The Word of God clearly destroys this blasphemy. Mary. was with child of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:34-35). It was prophesied that He would be born of the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15) and He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).

The gravest heresy among so many is the Mormon doctrine of Jesus Christ: A son of one god of many gods, our elder brother, a polygamist, whose death on Calvary gives all mankind physical resurrection so that we can be judged for our sins and pay the penalties for all sin not covered by our works! To believe this would require the removal of the major portion of the New Testament and a good amount of the Old Testament.

The Mormon must come to understand that we all sin and come short of God’s best for us (Romans 3:23). But God loved us, even though we separated ourselves from Him so very long ago. He sent His Son to reconcile us with Him. He became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21)! He was our Passover Lamb (I Corinthians 5:7)! For while we were enemies of God, we were restored through Calvary (Romans 5:8-10). We, in Christ, are redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)! Through the shedding of His blood, we have the forgiveness of sin (Ephesians 1:6-7), and accepted by God, raised up and seated together with Christ in Heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)!

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight:” (Colossians 1:21-22)

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, [and still against the Mormons] which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” (Colossians 2:14)

The Mormon leaders have removed the one true sin offering the only one possible! What a grievous error. They have taken God’s perfect gift His perfect love and replaced Calvary with their own judgement, their own version of the first covenant. They have taken the shed blood of Calvary away from Jesus.

The doctrines of Mormonism cannot stand the test of the Word of God. We are told that false teachers will come, fleeing from sound doctrine, they shall turn away their followers from the truth, unto fables (II Timothy 4:4)! How true that is of the Mormon leaders. “For the leaders of them shall cause them to err and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9:16)!

The tragedy of all this is that such beautiful, hard working, and committed people, are spiritually blinded people, with the light of the glorious gospel of Christ hid from them by Satan (II Cor. 4:3,4).

And only those sent by God, with the knowledge of God, using the Word of God can set them free. Are you one who can reach out to them and bring them the living light? I pray that you can and that you will!

Whatever else you may think about that neighbor, friend or loved one who is a Mormon, you need to remember that each and every Mormon you know is committed to this great plan and is struggling somewhere on the rung of a ladder in their own personal progression.

To mock their belief in this doctrine would be to reinforce their teaching that the True Faith will be persecuted. The Mormon must be approached with prayer and love. Your attitude is most important. The Scripture says that Jesus told the foolish and blind of His day that they would not see him, until they say “blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:39). It is likewise true that the Mormon people will open their blinded eyes and see the Lord when they truly feel that you are there, with love, in His Holy name.

THE HOLY PRIESTHOOD

Throughout this book, the Mormon priesthoods, Aaronic and Melchizedek, have been mentioned without any explanation as to what they are, how they came about or who they include. The most important test of these church offices is to compare them to what the Bible has to say about them.

The LDS Church teaches that Christ established the “true church” government before He ascended. Joseph described the return of John the Baptist, who descended in a cloud of light on May 15th, 1829, and ordained Joseph and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, to the Levitical Priesthood of Aaron, and gave them the authority to baptize. (D&C 13:1) A short time later Peter, James and John were to descend and confer the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, which would hold the keys to all the spiritual power of Christ⁷⁵². Other visitors, such as Moses, Elias and Elijah would later appear with their special messages and keys of “Restoration.”

Salvation, and more properly, celestial exaltation, is given only to those worthy males that hold the office of the priesthood. Women must rely on the good offices of their priesthood husbands for their deliverance. The Bible’s promise that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8) has nothing to do with Mormon salvation.

To further emphasize the connection between salvation and priesthood, Elder Mark E. Petersen relates:

“... The entire plan of salvation is embraced in the priesthood functions. Without the priesthood there would be no salvation, for it is through the Church that the Lord saves his faithful people, and it through the priesthood-men called of God as was Aaron-that the Church fulfills its divine destiny⁷⁵³.”

⁷⁵² *Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History*, 1:72.

⁷⁵³ *Priesthood*, p. 48; from *Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide-Search These Commandments*, 1984.

Then President, Spencer W. Kimball, continues in the same vein with further unbiblical doctrine:

“The priesthood is the power and authority of God delegated to man on earth to act in all things pertaining to the salvation of men. It is the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls. Without this priesthood power, men are lost⁷⁵⁴.”

The Mormon priesthood is the all-powerful arm of the Church from which all other functions emanate. The holder of the priesthood stands in authority over all church matters. Regardless of the heretic beginnings of the priesthood, the Mormon is bound to the supremacy of the priesthood.

NOT IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The problem with this is that the Mormons fail to show, that there was ever an establishment of the Melchizedek Priesthood by Christ or any of His Apostles. There is no witness of even one scripture where Christ laid hands upon any man and ordained him to the Melchizedek or Aaronic Priesthood. Further, nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus confirm the Old Testament Priesthood to be the established order for His Church. Quite the opposite was actually true! He cautioned his followers not to pollute the Church with the laws, ceremonies and rites of men when He told them to beware of “the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (See Matt. 16:5-12)

THEY NEVER HAD THE AUTHORITY

John the Baptist, the one who Joseph Smith said came down from heaven and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood NEVER even had that authority! (See Matt. 21:23-27) Neither Peter, James, John or any New Testament individual had the authority to bestow the Melchizedek Priesthood. This is akin to receiving a parking ticket from a fast-food cook. Neither of these priesthoods ever had a place among the followers of Jesus or in the New Testament Church. The Bible nowhere mentions this priesthood as being held by anyone other than the Melchizedek of the Old Testament. Christ only was “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” If the Mormon Jesus is a “priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” then the Mormon priesthood must stand the scrutiny that we have subjected the Mormon Jesus to.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Where in the New Testament does Christ establish temple ceremonies; the rites and rituals, blood oaths, secret words, names, combinations?

Where in the New Testament does Christ establish the wearing of specially designed and marked garments?

Where did He establish His twelve apostles to be under the control of a prophet and his two counselors?

Who was the first Prophet, Seer and Revelator so established?

Where in the New Testament was a Prophet, Seer and Revelator set apart and ordained as such?

Where did Jesus establish polygamy as the path to righteousness; as the ‘New and Everlasting Covenant’ with God?

If the Church Jesus established was “GOD’S PERFECT CHURCH” (Mormon emphasis), how could Christ establish it forever and miss all these highly important items?

What Mormons, time and time again, fail to recognize whenever their beliefs and doctrines are called into question is the validity of the prophet. We have made the Bible admonition against false prophets quite clear.

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:22)

⁷⁵⁴ *The Example of Abraham, Ensign*, June, 1975, p. 3.

We have dealt with the prophets of the Church as well as the prophecies given. It should be quite clear to the rational person that a majority of the prophecies failed to come to pass (remember, it only takes ONE false prophecy). This conclusion condemns the prophets. It is ludicrous for the “living Prophet” to attempt to invalidate his predecessors in an attempt to reinfuse truth. If the Church uses the scriptures that were “revealed” by a former prophet they have, by assent, invalidated the “only the living Prophet” argument.

WHAT DID JOSEPH SAY OF HIMSELF?

Joseph Smith had no such illusions. He assumed the head of the church, often calling it “my Church,” and instituted the scriptures for all time. Exactly what did he say of himself and how did he see himself in perspective with the Church as a whole? How did other church leaders see Joseph and what divine attributes did they ascribe to him?

“God called Joseph Smith and commanded him to proclaim the gospel ... Fullness of gospel set forth by Joseph Smith.” (D&C 1:17-18; 35:17.)

“I have more to boast of than any man ever had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from him; but the Latter-Day Saints never ran away from me yet⁷⁵⁵.”

[Joseph Smith] “I combat the error of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; ... I cut the Gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of universities, with truth-diamond truth; and God is my ‘right hand man.’”⁷⁵⁶

[Joseph Smith] “God made Aaron to be the mouthpiece for the children of Israel, and He will make me to God to you in His stead, and the Elders to be mouth for me; and if you don’t like it, you must lump it.”⁷⁵⁷

“Long shall his [Joseph Smith’s] blood which was shed by assassins plead unto heaven while the earth lauds his fame⁷⁵⁸.”

“He pleads their cause in the courts above ... He died, he died for those he loved ... He reigns, he reigns in the realms above ... Unchanged in death with a Saviour’s love, he pleads their cause in the courts above...The Saints, The Saints, his only pride, For them he lived, for them he died.”⁷⁵⁹

“To seal the testimony of this book (The D&C) and the *Book of Mormon*, we announce the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch ... [Joseph Smith said] “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter but I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT. IT SHALL BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD.” (D&C 135:1-7.)

WHAT DID THE CHURCH SAY OF JOSEPH SMITH?

“No greater prophet than Joseph Smith ever lived on the face of the earth save Jesus Christ”⁷⁶⁰

“...God has restored to the earth, in these last days, through Prophet Joseph Smith, His holy Priesthood with all the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, for the salvation of all men on the earth. Without these truths men may not hope for the riches of the life hereafter⁷⁶¹.”

“Joseph Smith holds the keys of this last dispensation, and is now engaged behind the veil (sic) in the great work of the last days ... No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith ... He holds the keys of that kingdom for the last dispensation—the keys to rule in the spirit world; and he rules there triumphantly ... He was foreordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation⁷⁶².”

⁷⁵⁵ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 408-409.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p.78.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p.319.

⁷⁵⁸ LDS Hymn Book, #147, 296, *Praise to the Man*.

⁷⁵⁹ *Joseph the Seer*.

⁷⁶⁰ Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses*, 21:317.

⁷⁶¹ Heber J. Grant, *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1935, pp. 204-205.

⁷⁶² Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 7:289-190.

THE NATURE OF THE MORMON GOD

Deeper review of the LDS doctrine of the Godhead reveals further separation. Basically, it is found in the Mormon doctrine of the “Law of Eternal Progression.” (as Man is, God once was-as God is, man may become). In the book, *Mormon Doctrine*, we are told:

Further, as the Prophet also taught, there is a God above the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... God the Father of Jesus Christ had a father ... Mortal persons who overcome all things and gain an ultimate exaltation will live eternally in the family unit and have spirit children, thus becoming eternal Fathers and eternal Mothers. God Himself, the Father of us all, is a glorified, exalted immortal resurrected man⁷⁶³.”

Joseph Smith really let the cat out of the bag in his sermon at the funeral of King Follett. Because of the length on God of the sermon, I will extract a few Of the key thoughts.

“I will prove that the world is wrong by showing what God is ... I will go back to the beginning before the world was ... God Himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the Great Secret. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea...”⁷⁶⁴

“Here then is eternal life-to know the only true God; and you have got to learn to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you-namely by going from one small degree to another-from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation ... and to sit in glory as do all those who sit, enthroned in everlasting power.”⁷⁶⁵

Not only did he pretty well tear apart the Christian belief about the nature of God, but he then brought to full circle the Law of Eternal Progression by placing man within it.

Putting all this into perspective, Joseph Smith then described the method by which his God planned for the creation of the world.

“In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it.”⁷⁶⁶

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Biblical position on this is quite simple. It just doesn’t teach or accept a single part of the “Law of Eternal Progression.” Bible scriptures are very clear in the matter.

“I am He, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.” (Isaiah 43:10-11).

“I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.” (Isaiah 44:6).

“God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself.” (Hebrews 6:13).

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18).

“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent” (Numbers 23:19).

On these and many other scriptures like them, stands the Biblical concept of God. They are in total disagreement with the Mormon view.

⁷⁶³ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 322-23, 517, 643.

⁷⁶⁴ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.346-47.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.349.

In fact, the whole matter goes beyond the concept of “different views of God”; we are dealing with “views of different Gods!” The emphasis is critically important.

What we face is the fact that either Mormonism is correct or the Bible is correct. One is right, the other is wrong!

THE MORMON CONCEPT OF SALVATION

Articles 2 and 3 of the Articles of Faith of the Mormon church give a brief look into Mormon doctrines regarding salvation.

2-We believe that men shall be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.

3-We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the Laws and Ordinances of the Gospel.” [the LDS Gospel]

The Mormon gospel essentially teaches that everyone will be saved. But the degree of glory depends on one’s obedience to the Mormon doctrine, including everything from tithing to Temple Ordinances for self and family, as well as baptism for the dead, obedience to the living Prophet and the hierarchy of the Priesthood, attending all meetings, missionary work, welfare work, etc. Perhaps the most widely accepted work on the subject is *The Articles of Faith* by James Talmage.

The summation of his words is the LDS position that there are actually two levels of salvation.

LEVEL ONE-THE GENERAL SALVATION

Talmage explains it this way:

“The extent of the atonement is universal, applying alike to all descendants of Adam. Even the unbeliever, the heathen and the child who dies before reaching the years of discretion, all are redeemed by the Saviour’s self-sacrifice from the individual consequences of the fall.”⁷⁶⁷

In other words, Christ’s death upon the cross brought a general salvation for all men, which is a resurrection in order to be judged for our works.

LEVEL TWO THE INDIVIDUAL SALVATION, OR EXALTATION

“Of the Saved, not all will be exalted to the higher glories. No one can be admitted to any order of glory, in short, no soul can be saved until Justice has been satisfied for violated law ... In the Kingdom of God there are numerous levels of gradations provided for those who are worthy of them.”⁷⁶⁸

The basic Mormon doctrine is that Christ’s atonement places all mankind at a judgment table to be reviewed for our righteousness and our works, or “obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.”

The LDS concept is, we shall all have access to three different levels of glory, depending upon our worthiness. The lake of fire, as a place of destination, is not part of present day Mormon theology.

The Celestial Kingdom, the highest level of which is reserved for those obedient members of the Melchizedek Priesthood, who shall, with their worthy wives, become gods and goddesses.

The Terrestrial Kingdom is a secondary level set aside for those who, though honorable, failed to comply with the requirements for exaltation, or for those who proved not valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Telestial Kingdom is the lowest. It is reserved for those who had no testimony of Christ or the gospel and were lost in the carnality of the world.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF SALVATION

⁷⁶⁷ *Articles of Faith*, p.85.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.91.

In contrast, the Christian understanding of salvation is altogether different. In the first place, the Bible teaches that all humanity has sinned and faces the judgment of God.

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20).

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

But the Bible also teaches that God has provided a way to forgiveness and eternal life for man. It is not something we can do. It is something God has already done for us! It can be summed up in one scripture:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

The Bible teaches that it is only through Christ that a person can be forgiven of sin and released from its penalties.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The Bible teaches that salvation is a free gift, with the price already having been paid by Christ, unearned by us.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).

The Bible teaches that by confessing and forsaking our sins, asking the Lord to forgive us, confessing our inability to come to the Father except through Jesus and asking Him to be our Saviour and the Lord of our life, we shall be forgiven and be born again and live eternally with God.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt.10:32).

“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

The Bible also teaches that those who refuse to believe Christ and obey Him will experience frightful judgment by God. Read Revelation 20:11-15. There are no three levels of glory taught here-but the lake of fire! Also,

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

A COMPARISON OF TWO THEOLOGIES

The basic difference between the two theologies is this:

The Mormon believes that personal salvation is a function or result of works of righteousness and obedience to laws and ordinances of the gospel.

The Bible teaches that works and obedience to God’s laws are a function or result of personal salvation.

In other words, the Bible teaches that you don't bark to become a dog, you bark because you are one. You can sit there forever and go "Baa, Baa, Baa" but you will never become a sheep. You bark because you ARE a dog, you baa because you ARE a sheep. You don't work to get saved; you work because and when you ARE saved.

The scriptures say it this way:

"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (Romans 9:31-32).

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:1-4).

Either the Mormon concept of salvation is correct or the Biblical concept of salvation is correct. One is RIGHT and the other is WRONG!

NEW SCRIPTURE

Another point of separation between Mormonism and Christianity is the LDS belief that God' has revealed, through His Latter-Day Prophet, new and more complete scripture. The LDS Church teaches that the *Book of Mormon*, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants are all new and vital scripture. The Christian denies the divine origin of these and maintains the Bible to be the only Scripture given by God.

"Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

"What thing soever I command you observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish it" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

"Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6).

In Christian understanding, the Mormon scriptures are false. Again, either the Mormons are correct in the matter or the Christians. There can be no middle of the road.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?

In summary, the doctrines of Mormonism that irreconcilably separate the Mormon Church and the Christian Church are as follows:

1. All "Christian" Churches except the Mormon church are in error, all are abominations before God.
2. The Bible is, at best, a weak source of truth. It is in error and God has sent more complete and accurate scripture.
3. We must earn our own salvation.
4. We can become Gods.
5. God was once a man but progressed into Godhood. So did our Heavenly Mother.
6. All this is known because God sent a prophet in the latter days.

These doctrines are not conceptual differences of the same man/God relationship. If they are truly the LDS theology, then Mormons and Christians are actually worshipping at different altars with totally different Gods and gospels!

Now the question is, what do we do with this information? If God is a loving and caring God, He will have provided some way for us to check out different gospels, different christs, and even different gods.

How can we, at such opposite ends in doctrinal difference, come together on some common ground to evaluate these differences in an effort to determine both truth and error?

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

The one area upon which we agree is the Holy Bible being the Word of God (insofar as it is translated correctly).

And we do have the correct translation of the original scriptures. The Dead Sea scrolls verify that we have the correct translation of the Old Testament; and a huge mass of ancient manuscripts of the New Testament verify that our New Testament is the same text that was first given to the Church of Christ.

Since both the Christian and the Mormon basically believe that the Bible is God's Word to man through the age of the Apostles, let's see what it has to say regarding the subjects we have covered.

FIRST, A WARNING OR TWO

The Bible is explicit in its warnings regarding doctrinal teachings other than those given in some detail by the New Testament inspired writers. Let's look at a few. Remember, they pertain to warnings against teachings other than those THEY brought to the people.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted... For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (II Cor. 11:34, 13-15).

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any -other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

Just what was the gospel Paul preached to the early church?

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-5).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:2-4).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:1-2).

"And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things" (Mark 13:21-23).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

Out of the mouths of two or three witnesses are all things proven true (Matthew 18:16). In the case of warnings about false doctrine and false prophets, many more than two or three witnesses have been given. Many, many references have been given in this book, some from the Bible, some from Mormon sources. Nearly all of them are easily available. The diligent investigator should be able to locate most of them. The question is what will you do with what you have read and “search these commandments”? Will you continue to believe that you are on the path to celestial glory because of the statements of a prophet that has been proven to be false? Will you be blindly guided by a “burning in the bosom,” hoping that inner feelings will provide the answer to that most important eternal question: “If you were to die right now, do you know with certainty where you would spend eternity?”

I am concerned that you come to know that Mormonism faces the grave danger of eternal condemnation if its doctrines are not in full accord with the Word of God.

A TRUE PROPHET?

James Talmage stated the challenge quite clearly in the book, *The Articles of Faith*.

“The question of this man’s [Joseph Smith] divine commission is a challenging one for the world today. If his claims to a divine appointment be false, forming as they do the foundation of the Church in this last dispensation, the superstructure cannot be stable; if however, his avowed ordination under the hands of heavenly personages be a fact, one need search no farther for the cause of the phenomenal vitality and continuous development of the restored church” (*The Articles of Faith*, p. 8).

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

This witness is not given to hurt you. A common thread that Ex-Mormons share is their love of those in the LDS Church. It is our greatest desire to see each and every Mormon discover the love of Jesus Christ

This witness is given to testify to you that the Lord loved me as much when I was a Mormon as he loves me today; that He loves you every bit as much as He loves me, but that He weeps for every soul lost in false doctrines and false religions.

This is not some intellectual battle between us, for the battle is the Lord’s, and it is with powers outside the realm of flesh and blood. He is calling His own from the world. He stands at the door and knocks. He has NO prophets and priests waiting there ahead of Him...He stands there!

Dear brothers and sisters, Joseph Smith has led you back into the bondage of the Old Testament Law, and more than that, back under the control of a false prophet. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law. The New Covenant Lamb of God put an end to it all and replaced it with His love and intercession. He (JESUS) is my high priest after the order of Melchizedek and there is no other in the kingdom of God (Hebrews 7:24).

THIS IS WHAT I PROFESS!

1. I do not place my eternal life in the hands of any Latter-Day Prophet nor is my eternal life conditional on my membership in any church or priesthood. I place my life at the foot of the cross, in Jesus Christ and in God’s Holy Word, the Bible.
2. Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God. He fails every test of a prophet, including teaching false doctrine, uttering false prophecies and lying.
3. The LDS Church is NOT “The Restored Gospel.” Scripture promises and history proves that the “Gospel, never left the earth.
4. The *Book of Mormon* is manifestly a contrived document and not of divine origin.
5. The Pearl of Great Price (particularly the Book of Abraham) is a work of pure fraud.

6. The Doctrine and Covenants have been rewritten, added to, and whole sections deleted in such proportion as to make it invalid as scripture of any kind, even if it were true that God originally spoke to Joseph (which He didn't).

7. The LDS Church leadership has made serious and substantial changes to all their scriptures as well as most Church history. I believe they have done this in order to dupe their members, to hide doctrinal errors and to protect some leaders from exposure of their moral failure.

8. The Priesthood of the LDS Church holds absolutely NO authority to act in the name of GOD. Its origin is a lie and its power is the power of priestcraft, and its author is Satan.

9. The LDS Law of Eternal Progression with its unscriptural description of the True Nature of God is the real abomination in the sight of God.

It is my solemn testimony and from belief that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints fails every test God has given us for this purpose. As mentioned earlier, the Saviour foretold of this happening in Mark 13:21-22:

“And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”

I chose to take heed to His Word in the twenty-first verse. “I believe you not.” After my own evaluation, I had my name removed from the records of the LDS Church.

THE REAL JESUS

The real Jesus is waiting to love you and nurture you and lead you into the safety of His Word. It is no strange doctrine, but a COMPLETE doctrine, to submit yourself to the gentleness of the true Saviour.

Ask Him into your heart today! The Real Jesus, the one who died on Calvary for your sins. Believe on Him, believe that having Jesus of Nazareth as your Lord and Saviour is all that you need to live with your Heavenly Father; that you don't need church membership or a special priesthood or temple garments or a prophet to guide you ... just JESUS! He is everything that God could give.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20.

Ask Him into your heart right now. He stands at the door and knocks!

HELP FOR MORMONS

If you are now in the church and would like further information on how to remove yourself and family from the Church; or if you are an ex-Mormon that is searching for a life in Christ beyond the LDS Church, there are many organizations that operate for the sole purpose of meeting your needs. The loving Christians at these organizations exist solely because of Christ's love. Write to one of them today.

A FINAL THOUGHT

If you have managed to get through all six chapters of this article and have honestly examined the evidence presented, you are to be commended. The stakes are indeed high! Your eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Many LDS folks I have spoken with lack the desire to examine the inconsistencies of LDS doctrine and fail to see the incompatibility between their doctrine and *The Book of Mormon*, if indeed they get that far. Even more distressing, many of them fail to see the message because of an over-riding desire to fault the bearer. The theme of the message is often lost in an attempt to discredit the credentials, background, or experience of the one presenting the message. Even more distressing is the fact that those that have truly received Jesus Christ, though they might be former LDS adherents, are automatically cast aside and derided as heretics. Only God can open the mind and heart to the message of the gospel. If you have read this far and have asked God to open your heart to the truth of His will for your life, I praise Him for the power that is His alone. If you have interpreted this as “anti-Mormon propaganda” and have sought ways to try and discredit this message, I pray that God will endow you with a desire to search within your heart. May He cause you to examine the LDS teachings and compel you to not only compare them with biblical teachings but to give you the desire to compare them against each other. My personal desire to learn God's truth caused me to examine every aspect of the LDS teachings. The result of my studies led me to the one true God,

Creator of the universe, Savior of my soul, for whom the LDS Church has no counterpart. I would ask you this final question: If God came right now and took you from this life, do you have absolute assurance where you would spend eternity?

--Derick S. Hartshorn

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